

## The Call of the Pacific Coast

Address by the Right Rev. A. J. Doull, Bishop  
of Kootenay, in the Church of the Redeemer,  
Toronto, October 24th, 1917.

I ESTEEM it a very great privilege to be able, in the City of Toronto, to bring before you some account of your own work in the great Province of British Columbia. I want to emphasize that it is your work. I want you to try and remember that the Church of the living God is one Body, sharing one divine life, the life of the Eternal Son of God Himself, communicated to her, and sharing also one common work, a work that was entrusted to her when the divine Master breathed upon the first representatives of the Church and communicated to them His own Divine mission in the world. "As my Father has sent Me even so send I you." And because the work is one, when I speak to you about the needs of British Columbia, I am speaking to you about your own work, a work in which you have a personal interest, a work in which you have also a personal responsibility. Not until every man, woman and child who is baptized into Jesus Christ realizes his or her own personal individual responsibility for the work of the Church in every part of the world, not until then will the work of the Church be done either effectively or efficiently. The work is one, the work of the one Church of the living God in all parts of the world. The life is one and therefore I want you to remember that when I am speaking to you about the needs of the Church of British Columbia, I am speaking about something that vitally concerns you, your own spiritual life, the life of your Diocese, and of your Parish, because it is absolutely and entirely impossible that the work of this Diocese or the work of this Parish or your own individual personal life can be in a sound, healthy, vigorous condition if the life of the Church in any part of the world is suffering or in need of help. The Church is a living organism. It is the body of Christ, and if one part suffers then all the members suffer with it. If one part be weak, the whole is weak, to that extent. I am accordingly telling you of that which vitally concerns you as members of the body of Jesus Christ. But before it is possible for you to understand the problems that are confronting the Church in British Columbia at the present day, it will be necessary for you to remember one or two things about it. In what I say I shall of necessity have my own Diocese mainly in mind, yet what I say is true of every part of that vast and extensive Province. I know the Province pretty well. I was for five years Dean of the Cathedral in Victoria in the Diocese of Columbia, and I know the Diocese of Columbia almost as well as I know my own Diocese. Owing to the absence at the Front of the Bishop of New Westminster, who also administers the Diocese of Cariboo, I have been doing a great deal of his Episcopal work and there are few parishes in the Dioceses of New Westminster and Cariboo where I have not been for the purpose of administering confirmation. I therefore can claim to know the southern part of British Columbia from personal knowledge and experience. The vast Diocese of Caledonia I do not know, but so far as the white work is concerned all I say of the south is true also of the north.

First of all I want you to try and realize the extent of British Columbia. It is a gigantic province. It contains a territory of 355,855 square miles. The Province of Quebec, the next largest, contains an area of 351,000 square

miles, and the Province of Ontario, which extends within 40 miles of the city of Winnipeg, contains an area of 261,000 square miles. British Columbia, 355,000 square miles. It is a gigantic province, but it is also the most sparsely settled of all the provinces of the Dominion. Until the C.P.R. was completed in 1885, British Columbia contained hardly any population at all. Victoria was a town of some consequence. There were one or two other settlements and a few trading posts in the interior; that was all. Then came the completion of the C.P.R., and there opened up a new chapter in our history. Population began to flow in, although the full tide of immigration did not begin until after the Boer War, about 1902. Between 1902 and 1913 British Columbia received a fair proportion of the tide of emigration which had set in from the Mother Country, to all parts of the Dominion, and yet in 1911, the last year to which we have the census returns, the total population of British Columbia was only 392,000 people (about half the population of the city of Montreal), and out of 392,000 people some 170,000 lived in the two cities of Victoria and Vancouver, leaving only some 220,000 people to spread themselves out over the entire territory of 355,000 square miles. Now you see the difficulty of the Church in the country before the outbreak of war. She had to minister to these settlers scattered in little groups here and there over a gigantic territory. She had to try and follow them and establish her parishes and begin her work. She had to try to keep these people and save them from the drift towards materialism. The census returns gave the Anglican Church 35 per cent. of the total population of British Columbia, but the great majority of them were what we call "census Anglicans." Their connection with the Church was very slight and the Church's work was to try and keep them from drifting. Her work was to try and stem the tide of indifference. You can have no comprehension at all of the tremendous forces of materialism, apathy and indifference prior to the outbreak of war. It was one of the most heart-rending tasks for the Church to try to keep the people from drifting, to try and build up the life of that great province upon the true foundation of the faith of God and reverence and obedience to His Holy Commands, but in spite of many obstacles she was doing it faithfully and well. But remember, she was dealing with an entirely new country, with new settlers living under new conditions and scattered in little groups here and there. Considering the difficulties of her work, it is amazing how many parishes were founded, how wonderfully the Church was beginning to get her grip upon the provincial life, but it was only just a beginning, nothing was wholly established. The foundations had to be consolidated. Then came the fatal day of August 4th, 1914,—the outbreak of war. What has been the result? Again, I do not think you understand, in the East, what a tremendous blow British Columbia has received in consequence of the outbreak of war. We are, so far as the male population is concerned, practically depopulated. We are proud of the fact that British Columbia and Alberta head the list of all the Canadian provinces, that in proportion to our population we have sent more men to the Front than any other part of the whole of Canada. We are proud of the fact that there are certain districts in British Columbia that have actually sent more men to the Front, in proportion, than any other part of the British Empire, except the Highlands of Scotland. We would not have it otherwise for a moment. Our boys are doing their duty to their God and their King and country. They are fighting on behalf of justice, liberty and truth. We are proud of them; but you see how difficult it is to "carry on,"

now that they have gone. When I tell you that in Kootenay Diocese, which has an area of 83,000 square miles, that in that Diocese alone I have lost about 60 per cent. of the male members of the Church of England, you will realize that it is very hard indeed to "carry on" when the war has hit us so very hard, when the men and boys who were coming forward to be the support of the Church have gone to fight for the principles of Jesus Christ upon the battle fields of France and Flanders. And what about those who remain? You will remember that the majority of our people were people who came out from the Old Country, some from the Prairie Provinces, some from Ontario, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, that they were people who came out to make homes for their boys and ensure a better future for them than they felt was possible in the old land. Now the boys have gone, and the fathers and mothers, the wives and sisters, are endeavouring to "carry on" as best they can, but it is hard for them to do so. They do not understand pioneer conditions. They do not understand fruit farming or any other kind of farming. It is very difficult for them, and they are not making ends meet, and their incomes, if they had them—and a number did have small supplementary incomes from the Old Country—have stopped or been greatly reduced in consequence of the increased income tax. They are, moreover, so scattered in small communities over our enormous territory that it is practically impossible for them to do anything at all to contribute to a resident clergyman in their midst. They are doing their best, but unless we receive outside help it is impossible to minister properly to these people, and we dare not leave them. Remember that in British Columbia, so far as the country places are concerned, we are the only religious communion retaining regular services, with very rare exceptions. In towns you will find the other Churches represented, but in the country we are the only religious body, with a few exceptions, carrying on regular religious services. We dare not desert them. They need as never before the comfort of our Lord Jesus Christ to-day, and they were never more anxious to receive it. It would be a cowardly and un-Christian thing to desert the fathers and mothers of the boys who are giving their lives for us. We are doing all the linking up we can. In my own Diocese, before the war 36 clergy were at work covering the territory. To-day there are only 27. Five are serving as Chaplains; four have left for work elsewhere, and many of my men are doing work formerly done by two, and some the work formerly done by three, but you know there is a limit to your power of linking up work with only 27 Priests to cover a territory of 83,000 square miles. I have about come to my limit. The distances are too great to do more linking up than I have done already, yet we must minister to these people. We dare not have these Churches closed. The Churches must be kept open so that the men and boys who come back from the Front will see that we have been faithful to our trust, that we have done our bit. The Churches must be kept open so that when they return they may find them ready; Churches into which they can go to render thanks for the blessings of victory and of peace. But we cannot do it unless you stand at our back.

Then there is another reason why we must keep these Churches open, why we must not abandon a single position the Church has already won in British Columbia, and that is because of the great Oriental problem. Eastern Canada does not understand this Oriental problem. You do not understand how hardly we have been hit by the war. You do not understand that we, as a province, stand alone in having received no compensation from the