

CENTENARY CELEBRATION OF THE ARRIVAL OF DR. JAMES MACGREGOR IN PICTOU.

On Wednesday July 21st the Presbytery of Pictou held a public meeting in Prince Street Church, Pictou, to celebrate the arrival of the first missionary and minister to Pictou, one hundred years before. There was a representative gathering from the different parts of the County, the day was perfect and the services interesting. The Moderator, Rev. R. Cumming presided and opened the meeting with appropriate devotional exercises, after which addresses were delivered, with singing and prayer between them and on one occasion the singing of one of Dr. MacGregor's Gaelic hymns, by Mr. John McDonald. Dr. Patterson gave an address on the State of Pictou at the time of Dr. MacGregor's arrival, Mr. Blair on the life and labor of Dr. MacGregor, and Dr. MacCrae of St. John on the progress since that time.

REV. DR. PATTERSON

began by speaking of the county a few years previous to Dr. MacGregor's arrival when there was not a white settler. In the month of October, 1765, the greater part of the county, with part of Colchester was granted by government, chiefly to speculators. On the tenth of June, 1767, the brig, Hope arrived from Philadelphia with six families which were the first settlers. The ship Hector, with some two hundred souls on board arrived Sep. 15. 1773. Some remained, some, disheartened, removed to Colchester. In 1783 the population is estimated at from 200 to 250. The next accession was at the peace of 1783, in the form of a large number of disbanded Highland Soldiers. At Dr. MacGregor's arrival in 1786 the population of the whole district was estimated at about 500 souls. A few scattered families lived near the Harbor, a few on the East, Middle and West Rivers. The only way from Truro to Pictou was by a blaze. There was not a foot of road in the whole county. East of the East River, there was not even a blaze to Canso. The whole county was covered with a dense forest, heavy timbers, with here and there a little log hut in a small clearing of from half an acre to an acre in size. No two huts without woods between. The travelling was chiefly by canoes, or along the banks of streams, with wide detours to get around creeks

and bogs, or in winter on snow-shoes. The log huts were roofed with bark, and stuffed with moss. The grinding was done by hand. The bread was baked in the ashes. Money was rarely seen. Wheat and maple sugar answered the purpose. There was no school, few books, and for the most part great religious ignorance. "Readings" were kept up by one or two godly men, until realizing their need of something more a petition was sent to Scotland for a minister and in response to it came Rev. James MacGregor, landing in Halifax on the 11th of July 1785, travelling on horseback, by a blaze, in company with another man to Truro, thence in the same way by blaze to a house some eleven miles from Pictou, thence being taken by a settler down the West River in a canoe to the Harbor, where, expecting to find a town he was sadly disappointed. All that was visible from the water was woods to the waters edge, a few log huts each in the midst of a small cleared patch of perhaps half an acre, and none in sight of a neighbor. The few that there were each are completely surrounded by forest.

REV. D. B. BLAIR

then read a paper on the "Life and Labors of Dr. MacGregor." He sketched the history of the clan, picturing vividly the cruel and unjust proscription by which they were outlawed. He reviewed the early life of Dr. MacGregor, the difficulties and trials of his earlier days in this county, his work as a missionary in other parts of Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick and P. E. Island, his annual visits to some of these more distant fields, being for long the only gospel sound that gladdened the lonely settlers in a strange land. The speaker quoted the language of Paul, "in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, &c.—In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often &c.—are without, the care of all the churches, as are applicable to this apostle of Pictou County. Often, with a potatoe for his fare and the floor for his couch to lay down to sleep by the log fire in the settlers hut. They shared with him what they had. They could do no more. But his labors soon bore fruit. The wilderness and the solitary place was made glad and the moral desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. Mr. Blair spoke with eloquence and with true Highland