

LONDON ASSEMBLIES

For a fourth time in its history, the City of London-on-the-Thames, Middlesex County, this year has the honor of entertaining the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Though the Assembly was formed in 1870, following the union of the three branches of the Church in Canada, it was not until 1883 that the invitation to meet in London was acted upon. This, however, was only the ninth assembly, which tells the story that the highest court of the church had not yet become a regular, annual event.

Five congregations combined in extending a royal welcome to the "fathers and brethren of the church," the First Presbyterian, with Rev. Dr. Proudfoot the second as its honored pastor; St. Andrew's, under the ministry of Rev. J. A. Allister Murray; King Street, in charge of Rev. Mr. Wright; and St. James' Church, of which Rev. D. McGillivray was the pastor. It was not until the following year that Knox Presbyterian Church became a settled charge in South London, under the guidance of Rev. James Ballantyne, now Rev. Dr. Ballantyne, of Knox College.

The Twenty-first Assembly met in London in 1895, and the Thirty-second in 1906, when church union was just beginning to loom large on the horizon and was hotly debated. The Assembly Church on that occasion, by the way, was the First Presbyterian, and Rev. Dr. W. J. Clark the pastor.

The London Assembly has had in each instance noted Moderators. In 1883, the Moderator was the late Principal King of Winnipeg, father of Mrs. C. W. Gordon. Principal King went to fill the important post of training men for the ministry in the Canadian West, from Knox College, Toronto. The late Dr. Robertson, pioneer missionary of the North West, and the home missionary giant of the Presbyterian Church in every sense of the word, was the presiding officer in 1895. He was a striking figure, this tall, bearded, muscular man, who perhaps more than any other citizen of Canada endured hardship that the foundations of Empire might be laid in righteousness on the prairies.

It is an interesting coincidence that the retiring Moderator that year and the one who delivered the opening sermon, should be Canada's most famous foreign missionary, Dr. G. L. MacKay, of Formosa. Mrs. D. C. MacGregor (Marian Keith), wife of the minister of this year's Assembly