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Bishop Richardson Will Remain Here

(Continued from page 3.)

ed me very deeply, and I thank you for it very heartily. I begin by saying I have not been unappreciative of the fact that, in regard to the point that has been at issue, there is much to be said upon the side of the Cathedral. Long before I made public my plans for a change of residence, I considered and reconsidered the claims of the Cathedral. It is not possible perhaps, for one not born and bred in Fredericton to enter altogether into the feelings of some of you upon the question, but I have done all that was in my power to see the various issues from the standpoint of this Cathedral. It was not lightly nor without the most careful consideration that I came to the conclusion that St. John was the best place for the Bishop to reside. That conclusion was the outcome of long and anxious thought. It is never a small thing to disregard sentiment, and to depart from the established traditions of very many years, and only the strongest possible reasons could ever warrant such a change.

It seems that some of you—perhaps most of you—have not yet understood the problem as it presents itself to me. It would even seem to have been assumed by some that I had no reasons other than those of personal preference and the like for the proposed change of residence, certainly no cogent reasons. It is right and proper therefore that I should put before you as briefly as may be what the reasons were by which I have been influenced.

To me the problem is largely practical. Personal considerations have not influenced me in this matter. There has been no question of likes and dislikes. I regard myself as a missionary Bishop—not the Bishop of this city only, but of a missionary diocese. A diocese abounding in difficulties of a very pressing kind, and the one thought in my mind has been the thought of making my work more effective in the interests of the whole. That was the thought with which I approached this problem of a place of residence for the Bishop of the diocese. I did not shift my eyes to the grave responsibility of making a radical departure from the traditions of the past. That is always a serious responsibility, but there is something far more serious still, something far more pregnant in its possibilities of evil to the church, and that is for a man in my position to make so many of long established custom and condition that the dead hand of the past is allowed to paralyze the living present.

I understand the importance of the past, but I understand also that new conditions bring with them new problems, and the key to their solution must be sought not in the past but in the present. Let me now try to put before you some of the reasons that led me to think that the Bishop of this diocese should make St. John his home.

(1). In the first place, I believe that the Bishop of any diocese ought to live in the most important commercial centre.

I do not stand alone in that opinion. It is generally recognized in the church that the Bishop ought to live where he can effectively feel the pulse of public life, and where the influence of his office can be most widely used. It was with that thought that Bishop Gore, some few years ago, deliberately abandoned as a place of residence a city where Cathedral life was rich with the associations of many centuries, Worcester, and chose to live instead in Birmingham. It was with that thought in mind that, within the last few weeks, it has been decided to move, not the episcopal residence only, but the Cathedral also, from New Westminster, where it was established in 1878, to the more populous city of Vancouver. It was with that thought in mind that I saw in St. John the place where the Bishop ought to live.

(2). I believe again that the Bishop of the Diocese ought to live in the strongest centre of church life and church population. Most of all is this true in the case of a missionary diocese such as this, whose country parishes are in very many cases dependent for support upon the financial help of others. In St. John today there are nearly 10,000 church people—more than five times as many as there are in Fredericton—almost one third of the church people in the diocese. Or look at the question in the light of missionary money. Last year the whole diocese gave the missions \$11,273.67 and of that amount the share of St. John was \$1,135.55. I have reason to believe that with the Bishop of the Diocese resident in St. John the missionary offerings from that city could be considerably increased.

(3). It seems further, a matter of great importance that the Bishop should live where he can best keep in touch with the work of all the church committees. Under present conditions, all regular meetings of the committees are held in St. John. It has been said that those meetings might be held in Fredericton, but not, I think, without great inconvenience and difficulty.

I do not say that it is quite impossible, but I question its practicability. Whatever may become true in the future, at the present time Fredericton is not a good centre for the transaction of the church's business. With so large a number of churchmen in St. John, it is inevitable that a considerable portion of those serving on committees of the Synod should be found living in that city. It is so in every other diocese with which I am acquainted—Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, Regina, Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Kingston, Quebec, Montreal, Halifax—in all these cities you will find that the business life of the diocese is centred. Natural conditions cannot be ignored.

(4). I am sure also, that the diocese is suffering for want of centralization in the official and secretarial work of the diocese. Whatever the future may bring, the only practical place for that centralization at present is St. John. So long as the official affairs of the church are managed by a voluntary board, it is of the greatest possible importance that the treasurer should live in St. John where he can be in daily touch with the members of the board. It is, again,

a matter of great moment that the Bishop and the treasurer should be close together. One thought in my mind in connection with the proposed change of residence was the possibility of securing a Synod office, in which there would be rooms for the Bishop, the treasurer and the secretary. At present there is no such Synod office, and I am consequently unable to keep closely in touch with the treasurer and secretary of the Synod. With the Bishop's residence in St. John, that difficulty could soon be overcome.

Machinery of the Church.

As things are today the machinery of the church is largely ineffective in the diocese because there is no efficient centre of activity.

(5) It is obvious, too, that the Bishop ought to be spared unnecessary travelling and unnecessary absence from home. For a single committee meeting I am sometimes away from Fredericton. As a matter of fact it is seldom less than three hours from house to house, and often it is very much more than that. But let it be three hours, and think how much time is wasted in travelling to St. John and back twenty-five or thirty times in every year. It is hardly too much to say that the necessity of going to St. John so frequently involves each year an expenditure of time upon the train equivalent to twelve or fifteen working days. Will any of you say that is a small thing?

But there is something more. For the meetings of committees, confirmations and other purposes, I am compelled to spend in St. John five or six weeks every year, and all that time I am dependent upon hotels or upon the hospitality of friends. Much of that time, moreover, is simply wasted. For a single committee meeting I am sometimes in St. John for twenty-four hours and most of the time I have nothing to do. If I were within reach of my own home I could go on with other work, but not so when I am living in Fredericton. I would remind you further, that in order to reach a large proportion of the parishes I have to go through St. John and in some cases I must leave Fredericton the day before. It has been said that this difficulty will be removed when the Valley Railroad and the Grand Trunk line are in operation. To some extent that will probably prove to be the case, but it is not so now, and for several years to come at least the diocese can only be worked from Fredericton at a great disadvantage.

Some of you I know find it hard to understand why I should be away from home so much. Your minds go back to Bishop Medley, and you tell me how often he was in the Cathedral, how much of his time he spent in Fredericton.

Policy of the Church in the Past.

Well, I can only say again that with new times and new problems there must come new methods of work. Of this thing I am absolutely sure—if the Bishop Medley were alive today confronted with our problems, and with our facilities for travel, he would never perpetuate the policy of earlier days. He was too good and too wise a man for that. The problems which a bishop have to solve today are not in his Cathedral, but in his diocese, but the Church of England learned that too late. Once upon a time, when I was a student in the English speaking people, there the English church was strong, predominant, it might indeed be said. Have you ever wondered why it is not so today? Have you ever asked yourself why the Church of England has so largely lost control of the country parts of Canada. I will tell you and I say it with the most profound respect for the first great leaders of the church in Canada. The policy of the church was wrong, and from it was handed down to us an inevitable heritage of weakness. I am not dealing now with this diocese alone, but with almost every diocese in the country parts of Canada. I am not criticizing the policy of any single bishop but the policy and practice of the church, and I say distinctly that it was, in my judgment, a very grave strategic error to concentrate upon the centres of population to the comparative neglect of country places. The point of attack for the Church of England in this diocese, and in almost every diocese in Canada today, is the country places. It is for that reason that I am unable to spend more time in the Cathedral.

These are some of the reasons that have led me little by little to think that my place of residence ought to be St. John. I have wanted, first of all, this evening, to put them before you very plainly, so that there would be no misconception in your minds. I do not expect to alter your strong conviction that the Cathedral city is the proper place for the Bishop's home, but I trust that I have said enough to make you sympathize at least a little with my own position, and to make you willing to admit that the arguments in support of it are very strong.

Responsibility of Decision.
So, at least, they seem to me, but I cannot fail to see also that there is something to be said upon the other side. You tell me deliberately that, in your judgment, a removal on my part will have disastrous effects upon the spiritual life and financial interests of the Cathedral congregation. It is your opinion that the proposed change will seriously impair the dignity of the Cathedral as the Mother Church. You are good enough to say further that such a severance of our close and mutual relationships would be a cause of real pain and grief to you. Such representations as these have, of course, the clearest kind of claim upon my sympathy and earnest thought; and I have felt in honor bound to reconsider my conclusions very carefully. Let me tell you briefly the steps that I have taken in my desire to reach a right decision. It goes without saying that I have prayed much about it, as I believe

that many of you have prayed about it. But I have done more than that. In a matter of this kind, I do not deem it wise for a Bishop to submit himself to the ruling of any committee of the Synod. The responsibility of decision must rest upon himself. It has seemed to me, however, only right that in a question of such complex character I should weigh my own conclusions in the balance of other men's opinions, and that is what I have been doing. I have put the question confidentially before a number of clergymen and laymen of the diocese, asking them to tell me frankly what they thought. I am, profoundly thankful that, all over the diocese there are men to whom I can turn in this way at any time, and I feel perfectly sure that they will spare no pains to give me an honest judgment. That is an asset in which any Bishop may well rejoice. In addition to that, I tried to put the question in all its bearings before three of our ablest Bishops—men who are fairly familiar with the whole history of the diocese. Further still, I have taken the trouble to ascertain the opinion of a railroad man of high repute as to the possible and probable effect of impending railroad development upon Fredericton as a centre of communication with all parts of the province. I do not know anything else that I could have done in my attempt to test the accuracy of my own judgment.

And, now, what has been the outcome of it all? You will not be surprised to hear that those with whom I have taken counsel are not a unit in their judgment upon the question. That was to be expected. Briefly, the result of my inquiries has been this: The Bishops all endorse my own opinion. No doubt, it is not easy for anyone of the diocese to appreciate the question in all its bearings. I frankly admit that, though I put the question as fairly as I could. Looking, however, at the situation as it stands today, it seems to my brothers in the Episcopate that the administration of the diocese could be made much more effective from Saint John. That is my own opinion, and it is also theirs.

Of those whom I have consulted in the diocese, it is sufficient to say that a considerable majority, while fully recognizing the difficulties that are involved in the proposed change, are distinctly of opinion that it would be in the best interests of the Church. Of the remainder there are some who hold a directly contrary opinion, whilst others still express themselves as favoring the change, but are doubtful as to its expediency now.

On the whole, and so far as my field of inquiry has extended, the balance of opinion is distinctly in favor of St. John. I do not pretend to know what a canvass of the entire diocese would show. That is something, which, under any circumstances, would not commend itself to me. I have gone as far as I consider wise.

Decision Arrived At.

It only remains to tell you the decision to which I have come in the light of three considerations, which I will briefly state:

(1) In the first place, I find that there are those in the diocese, for whose judgment I have the highest possible respect, who believe that the removal of the Bishop's residence from the Cathedral City would be a mistake. I still think that they are mistaken, but I do not feel absolutely sure. In view of the fact that a change at this time might mean a change for ever, it is not too much to ask, I think, that there should be that absolute assurance in my mind. (2) In the second place, I am assured by one who ought to know, that the railroad development of the no distant future will bring no inconsiderable relief in the matter of communication with the different parishes. That is a consideration of great importance, though it does not touch, of course, two of my most weighty reasons for the contemplated change. (3) In the third place, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that the proposed change is viewed with the greatest possible alarm by the Cathedral congregation—a feeling of

(Continued on Page 4.)

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