

REPORT OF DEPUTY'S VISIT TO CANADA.

By REV. DR. R. MACDONALD.

I SAILED from Liverpool on the 8th November, 1949, and arrived safely in Canada on the 16th to begin a tour of our congregations there. I imagine that few countries outside Scotland make the appeal to a Highlander that this vast Dominion does. For many generations now the youth of our country have found there the opportunity of economic betterment which was largely denied them in the homeland, and on Canada our countrymen have very definitely left their impress.

With such thoughts as these, I stepped ashore at Wolfe's Cove, where once Highland soldiers clambered up the cliffs to play their part in the notable victory on the Plains of Abraham above. This historic battle has had far-reaching consequences for Canada, not the least being the establishment and growth of Protestantism in Canada west of the Ottawa river, and even to some extent in Quebec Province itself. Readers of this Report will be especially interested in the growth of Presbyterianism. Early Dutch settlers and French Huguenots, together with Scottish and Irish emigrants, brought the principles of Scriptural worship to the Atlantic shores, but it was not till well on in the nineteenth century that the Presbyterian Church in Canada was organised with its Scottish affiliations strongly marked in its Confession, its Knox Colleges and St. Andrew's Churches in all the large towns.

The factors which were operative towards the end of last century in Scotland in bringing our own Church into existence were also present in Canada at that time, and led to some people in Ontario casting in their lot with the Free Presbyterian Church. Since then, Western Canada has been opened up and many Scottish-born Free Presbyterians congregated there. It is these with their descendants who now form our congregations in Canada. The only sanctioned charges are in Winnipeg and Vancouver, with small groups in Calgary and Saskatoon, which are usually visited by our Deputies.

Proceeding from Quebec, I arrived in Toronto, where I was met and hospitably entertained by Mr. Roderick Campbell. On Sabbath I took the services in Bloor Street Independent Presbyterian Church. From Toronto I went on to Winnipeg,

where I stayed two months taking the Sabbath and week-day services. This was in the middle of a Canadian winter on the prairies, an experience I shall never forget, as I shall never forget the kindness and consideration of our people in that city. This congregation is very small and the outlook is not promising. The services, in the absence of a Deputy, are taken by Mr. Alan Macleod, elder, but he expects, now that he is retired from his employment, to move to Vancouver. The younger generation have not followed in their allegiance to the Church and this is a most disheartening feature to all who knew this congregation in more prosperous days.

In February, I went on to the foot-hill city of Calgary. There for, four Sabbaths I preached to a group of twenty to thirty in a rented room, and on a week day we met in the house of Mr. Angus Beaton. Here, as in Winnipeg, I met with the greatest kindness, and I pray God may reward them all with His spiritual blessings who were so free with their temporal. Through the Rockies to Vancouver is a never to be forgotten experience. I made this journey just as the snows were melting and Spring was coming to British Columbia.

On arrival in Vancouver, I was met by the elder, Mr. Hugh Mackay, and stayed at his very hospitable home for the five months I was in the city. I soon made the acquaintance of all our people there. The congregation in Vancouver, though not large, is considerably larger than Winnipeg. One pleasing feature is that a number of the younger generations, attend regularly. While I was there this congregation proceeded with a Call to me, which I accepted believing this course to be my duty and according to the Lord's will. Communion services were held here. After ministering in Vancouver for five months, I retraced my steps eastward, via Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, to Toronto. At Calgary, I remained four Sabbaths. Here I met Mr. Tom MacDonald, elder, from Brock, Saskatchewan. I had the pleasure of seeing him again at Winnipeg when he came down to the Communion on the last of my four Sabbaths there.

I spent one Sabbath at Saskatoon and held services in the house of Mr. Brand.

When I arrived in Winnipeg in July the trying time which the city experienced due to the flooding of the Red River was over. Apart from minor inconveniences, none of our people suffered at that distressing time. Again, I spent some days in Toronto taking the services on the Sabbath in the Bloor Street Church.

From there I proceeded to Buffalo, U.S.A., where for a week I was most kindly entertained in the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. Macdonald.

I had been asked to visit Detroit. and I was able to give one Sabbath in the Highland Mission there. This was my last public appearance in America, and I proceeded immediately, via Toronto, to join the steamer *Britannic* at New York. I arrived at Liverpool in the last week of October, almost a year from the date of sailing from that port.

Impressions gained on this most interesting tour were of the loyalty of our people to the Church, together with a sense of regret that it was not found possible in the past to do more in the way of organising congregations, in other the above-mentioned places; sadness on account of the dissensions which have marred beginnings in various places which in the past were most promising, and an abiding sense of the great kindness and courtesy of our Canadian and American friends.

I would like to assure all of them who may read this, of my sincere appreciation of this kindness, which I believe was on account of my being in the Master's service.