

11

Survival and Reconstruction

“Watchman, what of the night?”

Long before the announced watchnight service was to begin, streams of people began to arrive at Knox Church. As Dr. John G. Inkster led the assembled multitude in devotions for two hours, every pew filled, and crowds overflowed into the aisles. “With prayer and praise the tenth of June was ushered in, — prayer for the strengthening of the ‘remnant’ which should be left and praise that the remnant was so considerable.”¹ At 11:45 p.m. the adjourned Assembly was reconstituted — the Presbyterian Church in Canada was “more alive with determined purpose than at any other previous hour in her history.”² On 11 June this Assembly of seventy-nine ministers and elders met again in business session at St. Andrew’s Church, where the Presbyterian Church Association had been born twelve years earlier. In anticipation of the disruption, “Presbyterial Advisory Councils” all over Canada had commissioned hundreds of delegates who were now received, along with any other dissenting ministers, to swell the “rump” into a fully representative Assembly. After electing Ephraim Scott as its moderator, the Assembly worked for another week to lay the groundwork for survival and reconstruction.

The precise condition of the church was still unclear. The number of surviving congregations and continuing members would not be known for several months and the property of the church — its buildings and endowments — was to be divided in future by a federal commission. To assist the many “minority”

congregations in the task of building new churches, the General Assembly created a committee on architecture which developed plans for three sizes and types of churches that might be constructed at moderate cost — a small church in wood, a larger one of wood or brick, and one to seat 500, built of brick or stone.³ In the space of just five years following the ‘disunion’ a total of \$4.7 million was spent by congregations and the church on housing the “minorities,” and in the same period the number of preaching stations rose from 1,140 to 1,330 and the number of missions from 130 to 200.⁴

PROPORTION OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MEMBERS AND
ADHERENTS IN THE CANADIAN POPULATION, 1921, 1931
(based on Canadian census data)

	1921			1931		
	Population	Presby- terians	%	Population	Presby terians	%
Canada	8,788,483	1,409,407	16	10,376,786	870,728	8
P.E.I.	88,615	25,945	29	88,038	14,813	17
N.S.	523,837	109,860	21	512,846	48,960	10
N.B.	387,876	41,277	11	408,219	16,260	4
Que.	2,361,199	73,748	32	874,255	59,532	2
Ont.	2,933,661	613,537	21	3,431,683	450,664	13
Man.	610,118	138,201	23	700,139	55,720	7
Sask.	757,510	162,165	21	921,785	67,954	7
Alta.	588,454	120,991	21	731,605	72,069	9
B.C.	524,582	123,022	23	694,263	84,183	12
Yukon	4,157	573	14	4,230	432	10
N.W.T.	7,988	45	0.56	9,723	141	1.45

By September, 1925, the organization of the church had taken sufficient form that a supplementary Assembly met in Montreal and officially recognized forty-three presbyteries — four in the Maritimes, two in Quebec, twenty-four in Ontario three in each of the prairie provinces and four in British Columbia.⁵ Membership was estimated at 150,000 and a budget set at \$600,000 or \$4 per member. Geographically the continuing church was obviously heavily imbalanced in favour of the central region — 115,000 Presbyterians were in Ontario and Quebec, only 35,000 in the other seven provinces. In the *Record* of April, 1926, Scott wrote “From Our Airplane: A Bird’s Eye View” of the church which, he claimed, was territorially “as far

reaching as ever before” and still more than half its pre-union numerical size. Perhaps this overview proved in the end too discouraging since the author’s imaginary airplane never got west of the Maritimes.

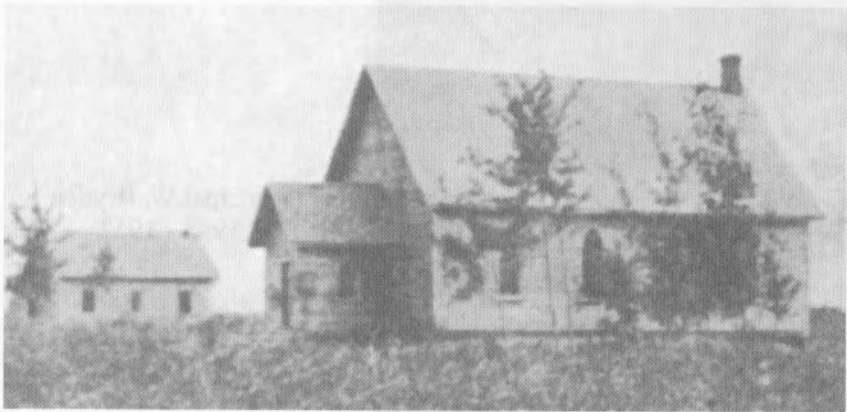
Because a larger proportion of Presbyterian ministers than laymen had chosen to enter union, the United Church was embarrassed by a surplus of clergy while many Presbyterian charges remained without pastors. Through 1925 and 1926 the whole situation of the continuing church was in such a state of flux that it is difficult to ascertain the exact shortfall in ministerial supply. By 1927, however, conditions had become more stabilized — the Maritimes were reported in need of forty men and Ontario and the west wanted one hundred.⁶ A Vacancy Committee was already operative and seeking a minimum of twenty-five ministers. Seventeen had been recruited from Britain but two of them soon returned home. Anticipating this shortage, the anti-unionists had approached John Gresham Machen, the fiery conservative at Princeton Seminary, in 1925 about the possibility of getting fifty American divinity students to man vacant charges. Machen responded with enthusiasm, paying the travel expenses of some volunteers from his own pocket, although the exact number that he sent is uncertain. His personal interest in the events of 1925 (like other American conservatives he was hostile to all ecumenical movements) is indicated by his letter to the rump Assembly on the morrow of union. Hailing the continuing church as “a city set on a hill,” Machen prayed that the Assembly might be “richly blessed in your witness” against “compromising interdenominationalism,” to which the Assembly replied with a vote of thanks for his services in “securing men for our congregations and minority groups.”⁷

As early as 1926 complaints were coming in that some ministers who had entered the union were now representing themselves as Presbyterians when applying for jobs in the United States. More complaints and warnings were received from presbyteries about recruiting procedures within the church. Established rules were being ignored in the panicky effort to fill vacancies, and “educational attainments and doctrinal standards” of candidates were not being strictly scrutinized. If these complaints were justified, they may have arisen in part from the fact that the Board of Administration had been composed entirely of laymen in 1925.⁸ A majority of presbyteries supported the formation of a new Board and one presbytery specifically suggested that the Commission on the reception of ministers be discontinued in favour of having all applications considered by a committee of Assembly when General Assembly was in session.

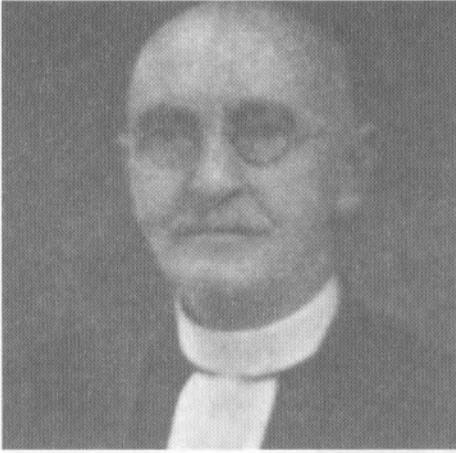
Although Knox College had been granted to the continuing church by the Ontario enabling act, this did little to alleviate the shortage of clergy because



D.G. "McQueen of
Edmonton"



First Church, Edmonton



Dr. and Mrs. John Buchanan



Principal W. Bryden
1945 - 1952

three quarters of the College's forty-four students and all the faculty left at union. The fate of The Presbyterian College, which retained seven of its pre-union enrolment of twelve, was more uncertain and also more dramatic. The last Assembly of the undivided church had fired the faculty and appointed an acting principal and Board of Management, although the future ownership of the College had yet to be decided by the Quebec legislature. Immediately after the Assembly's action a telegram was sent to the unionists of Montreal, who occupied the college and took its seal and records. According to the *Record* of October, 1925, Principal Fraser arrived home from Scotland hours later to find himself barred from his office by private detectives employed by the new Board. He and Professor Eakin were later given their private property from their offices but already the post-union Assembly had rehired them and appointed another Board of Management.

The action of the unionists had been "illegal and indecent" but The Presbyterian College authorities were unwilling to meet force with force, preferring to await a legal decision which might well be influenced through public indignation aroused by the unionist "grab." Meanwhile, with the help of faculty from McGill and the Anglican Diocesan College and of six ministers recruited locally as part-time teachers, the college continued to offer its courses in theology and great was the joy when the property settlement between the churches later restored The Presbyterian College to the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Not the least of the advantages of its temporary exile, Principal Fraser noted, was the College's closer relation to McGill University.⁹

Another branch of church work disrupted in 1925 was the service to immigrants. The Department of the Stranger ceased to exist and with it the immigration chaplains disappeared, but in 1926 a chaplain was appointed at Saint John who welcomed 886 Presbyterians during his year, and another man was stationed in Montreal. T. H. Boyd, the long-time agent in Britain, had joined the United Church and was not replaced until Alexander Spark was appointed in his stead in 1928, when a chaplain was also designated for Winnipeg.¹⁰ The work of these chaplains continued until 1931 but thereafter no reports were received, probably because financial difficulties caused by the Great Depression and the sharp decline in immigration made their work next to impossible.

In the ten years before World War I the circulation of the *Record* had risen from 50,000 to 64,000 and although this figure declined during the war, by 1921 the average monthly circulation stood at 62,000. From that date until union, circulation fell steadily each year until in 1924 it had reached 53,000. Undoubtedly this loss of readers resulted from the known anti-unionism of

the editor, Ephraim Scott, but because the loss had occurred in the pre-union period the *Record* was able to pass the crisis of 1925 with its list of subscribers virtually intact and to enter the new age with a circulation of over 50,000 among the church's 77,000 families. In view of the great loss of membership at union this figure actually represented a strong increase of support for the journal on the part of continuing Presbyterians and provides one more evidence of the responsive sense of dedication on the part of those who were determined that Presbyterianism in Canada must continue to be, and to be seen as, a religious force in Canada.

One year after union the Presbyterian Church had good reasons for rejoicing. The self-sacrifice of members had produced new churches for shattered congregations and many vacant pulpits had now been filled. Communicant membership had passed 160,000 (an increase of over 9,000), the number of preaching stations had increased by more than one hundred; sixty-eight new ministers had been received and total church income had risen by one-third. Some of the questions of 1925 had been answered and W. Leslie Clay, the new moderator, could enter on his duties with high prospects.¹¹ By 1927 the state of the church again showed improvement, although not as marked as in 1926. Seventeen ministers had died including Clay, but the number of clergy had still risen by twenty-eight, the number of preaching stations by thirty-three, and the number of communicants by over 9,000. Total church receipts had passed \$450,000, but this was an increase of only twelve per cent and the surplus was just half that of the previous year.¹² Growth was still being recorded under every heading, but its pace was beginning to slacken. In April the church treasurer had appealed publicly for monthly payments to the church budget. Because most congregational allocations were being paid at the end of the year — presumably after local needs had been met — the church might be forced to get short-term bank loans, thus defeating the stated policy of avoiding debt.¹³

The seriousness of this trend was grasped by the Budget Committee the following year and a public warning was issued in the *Record* of September, 1928, that in spite of its numerical growth “the church has reached a critical period.” The amount raised for the 1927 budget had fallen short of their target by \$159,999 and there was still a bank overdraft of \$60,000. Foreign missions, which were not being expanded, needed extensive repairs to existing facilities. Appeals for help in home missions had been rejected for lack of funds. Both in 1927 and in 1928 financial statements showed that at mid-year every presbytery had fallen far short of the halfway mark on its budget allocation. The Committee asked each congregation to undertake an “Every Person Canvass” and to recognize their dual obligations — to the church as

well as to their congregation — by giving regularly to both sides of their Duplex Envelopes.

By the autumn of 1927 the final property reckoning had been made with the United Church, and the Presbyterian Church could tell exactly where it stood. The division had been a long and complicated process but, as the *Record* of June, 1927 remarked, “we can now breathe more easily.” Five settlement houses or homes, six home mission schools, two hospitals and The Presbyterian College had been allotted to the church.¹⁴ A number of smaller properties were to be sold for the benefit of both churches and the various funds were to be divided in proportions of sixty-four per cent to thirty-six per cent. The editor of the *Record* was pleased with this division and with its implications for the future. “We have a very appreciable share in these funds...We are not now in the eyes of the world the insignificant handful of malcontents we were widely declared to be. We have numbers, property, standing far beyond the prophecies of our former leaders and we have not yet attained.”

One other aspect of post-union survival and reconstruction remains to be considered. On the eve of “disunion” the Presbyterian Church had been supporting eight foreign mission fields — Trinidad, British Guiana, Central India and Gwalior, Formosa, North and South China, and Korea. Unlike the church at home no “native” church body in these fields was ever consulted regarding union. In the “great divorce” the proceedings were conducted exclusively between the “parents” — the “children” had no say as to which “parent” they would be assigned.¹⁵ The missions had felt the effects of the long crisis of church union even before the “divorce” decree became final in 1925. Mission funds had begun to shrink in 1923 as anti-unionists withheld donations to the Budget. The consequences in the field were doubly disastrous because of the post-war inflation afflicting the world. In China, for instance, the value of the Canadian dollar had been cut in half. Postwar mission givings had not increased appreciably and by 1922 the Foreign Mission Board was over \$166,000 in debt as annual donations fell short of expenses by a third. In 1923 the “minimum” estimates were cut by \$350,000 and in the end it was necessary to withdraw some missionaries from the fields, a move seized upon by unionists as proof of the need for union.¹⁶

The missionaries themselves were overwhelmingly in favour of union. In Honan only Dr. and Mrs. Goforth opposed union in a staff of ninety-three; in Formosa G. W. Mackay and his wife were the only anti-unionists among twenty-four workers. The story was the same in other fields — 39 of 49 in Korea, 84 of 89 in central India, all twenty-one workers in Trinidad, all ten missionaries in British Guiana, and 19 of 24 in south China were avowed

unionists. The only exception was Gwalior, the smallest field, where the three married couples were anti-unionists but two single women supported union. The explanation of this preponderant pro-union feeling among the missionaries is two-fold — acceptance of liberal theology and the social gospel, and rejection of the waste of overlap.¹⁷ On June 10, 1925 all the overseas mission fields passed to the United Church and nonconcurrents were advised that, if they wished to retain their posts, they must cease to correspond with the Presbyterian Church.

This new dispensation was unacceptable to the continuing church at home and to the anti-union missionaries. The United Church was willing to leave the missionaries at their posts and operate on the principle of co-operation, but the Presbyterians insisted their church must have its own missions in the belief that workers and funds could easily be found in Canada. Manpower was in fact available, but funds were as scarce after union as before.¹⁸ The property commission in Canada was already heavily burdened and unprepared to cope with the question of foreign missions. When this new issue was raised the commission empowered the mission secretaries of the United Church and Presbyterian Church — A. E. Armstrong and A. S. Grant — to work out an arrangement that the commission could approve. Perhaps the task of those two men was made easier by their mutual respect and by the fact that neither had ever visited any overseas field.

The future of two fields, Gwalior and Trinidad, were never discussed. John Wilkie, founder of Gwalior, was reputed to be so difficult that the United Church declined to retain him. Trinidad was so solidly pro-unionist that the Presbyterian Church never expected to retain a foothold there. The Presbyterians did, however, want a mission in the Caribbean because of the long interest of the Maritimes in that area. British Guiana was therefore relinquished to them after the missionaries indicated a willingness to stay with the continuing church. Finally, Formosa and the Bhil field in India were also given to the continuing church. It is noteworthy that these four fields were all in the hands of “pioneer” missionaries. James Cropper had started the British Guiana mission just as Wilkie had the Gwalior; G. W. Mackay was the son of the “Black Bearded Barbarian” and a native of Formosa; and John Buchanan had now served over thirty years in the Bhil district. Each man was an individualist, sensitive to any supposed interference from home, deeply attached to his own field; each was also conservative and well advanced in years. This pattern repeated itself when two new fields were opened by displaced anti-unionist missionaries. The Rev. Luther Young, veteran of twenty-three years in Korea, moved to Japan, and Goforth, now partly blind, began a mission in Manchuria after thirty-nine years’ service in

Honan. The age, personality and experience of these men were factors that inevitably influenced the whole course of Presbyterian foreign missions in the generation after the “great divorce.”

In Search of an Identity

Despite the federal and provincial legislation which denied to the continuing church the legal title “Presbyterian Church in Canada,” that name continued to be used by Presbyterians from the moment of union onwards. There was too much in that name, not merely of tradition and affection, but for the very survival of the church, for it ever to be abandoned. To use any other title would be an admission that the Presbyterian Church had entered union and that the present church was therefore a sect or offshoot rather than the true but disrupted Presbyterian Church in Canada. In a word, the question was, who had withdrawn from the Presbyterian Church in 1925 — the unionists or the anti-unionists? Hence the “Fight for the Name” occupied the serious attention of the continuing church after 1925, and the struggle was waged on two separate but interrelated fronts — in Canada against the United Church’s claim to be the legitimate and sole heir-possessor of that name, and abroad for that recognition from international bodies which could justify the church’s insistence that it was still *the* Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The first and in some ways the key battle was fought in the World Presbyterian Alliance — to win this battle was to win half the war. The Alliance was quick to recognize the United Church as legitimate successor to the Presbyterian Church in Canada but offered membership to the anti-union body as the Presbyterian Church *of* Canada. So much was at stake that Scott at once protested this decision in his official capacity as Moderator. In a long letter to the Western Section (North American) of the Alliance, printed in the *Record* of January 1927, he defended the church’s right to retain “the name,” denying that it was “a new Presbyterian Church, and not the old Presbyterian Church in Canada which had been a member of the Alliance for fifty years.” “No new Presbyterian Church in Canada has been organized in Canada. Therefore we are the same Presbyterian Church in Canada that we formerly were.” If the United Church objected that the use of the name was illegal, it could take action in the courts — but the United Church dared not test its own assertions and therefore was trying “at home and abroad...to deprive us of our rights.” The Alliance’s Council had welcomed the church “under whatever name may be finally decided” but now its Western Section

persisted in interfering in Canadian affairs by referring to “the Continuing Presbyterian Church in Canada.”

The programme of the 1928 conference of the Alliance’s Western Section still referred to “The Presbyterian Church of Canada” and papers presented there on church union brought two of the Canadian Presbyterians to their feet in protest. S. Banks Nelson deplored the levity of previous speakers and A. J. MacGillivray warned against union by coercion such as Canada had experienced. S. C. Parker’s request that the next meeting of the Western Section should hear the negative side of the union question was rejected, but the crowning insult came at a social gathering when Dr. Clarence Mackinnon of the United Church was asked to speak on behalf of Canadian Presbyterians. There was more than disillusionment in Canadian Presbyterian circles with the attitude of the World Alliance that accepted the United Church’s claims so uncritically. The *Record* warned in May, 1928, that, “since the reception of the United Church into the membership of the Alliance, insidious influences have been at work which will prove destructive to confidence and harmony.”

Two years later relations between the church and the Alliance improved somewhat when W. M. Rochester, now editor of the *Record*, became chairman of the Western Section, a move interpreted as recognition for the Presbyterian Church in Canada.¹⁹ The Alliance, however, still refused to come to grips officially with “the name” until 1938 when changes in the relations of the Presbyterian and United churches at last paved the way politically for full international acceptance of the title, “Presbyterian Church *in* Canada.”

The question of relations with the United Church came to a head in the General Assembly of 1932 after an official protest was received from the United Church against the continued use of the name “The Presbyterian Church in Canada” and its implications of continuity. When Dr. Wardlaw Taylor moved that the fraternal delegates from the United Church should not be received by the Assembly an unprecedented storm broke out. Those opposing his resolution declared that, “it was time that ill will should come to an end, and the spirit of brotherly love prevail.”²⁰ The United Church delegate, waiting in the manse of the host church, decided, however, not to appear in the Assembly where the spirit of brotherly love was far from unanimous. The *Record* of July, 1932, commented that a majority would have supported Dr. Taylor’s position, but that the real culprit was the arrogance of the United Church and its protest. “Consistency, we contend, would suggest that the United Church should withhold this protest and acknowledge us to be what we claim to be, or refrain from fraternal advances.”

Several legal cases had arisen out of the union, usually involving the possession of property or the disposal of bequests. In every case apparently

the original court decision was appealed to a higher tribunal — in one instance to the ultimate authority, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in Britain — and the results of some cases seemed in conflict with decisions in others. No box score of the wins and losses of the Presbyterian and United churches was kept, but the Presbyterian Church seems to have won more often and in the most important cases. As a prelude to the two most crucial decisions — legacies from the Gray and Kent estates — opinions on the Eliza Patriquin estate seemed to point the way towards the final solution of the fight for the name. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that a congregation entering union ceased to be Presbyterian. Therefore the United Church was a new church, the Presbyterian was still the body formed in 1875. One judge suggested the interesting image of Presbyterianism dividing into two streams in 1925, but H. S. Cassells, the Presbyterian counsel, commented: “There is still open the question of the status of The Presbyterian Church in Canada as it now exists, and that question will sooner or later have to be answered.”²¹

The question was answered sooner, for just two years after the Patriquin decision, the court’s judgement on the estate of Jessie Gray announced unequivocally that the Presbyterian Church “retained the original name, or is commonly known by that name, or by a name substantially the same” because its polity and doctrine were unchanged. The Kent case in 1938 was largely a confirmation of this since it ensured that pre-union bequests to local congregations (as opposed to the church or its national boards) also remained in Presbyterian hands.²² It was on the strength of these legal pronouncements, and especially the Gray case of 1932, that the church won its fight for the name and obtained the recognition it had sought at home and abroad.

A denominational identity, however, must consist of more than a name. After union Presbyterians naturally felt defensive about their church — the charge of divisive action and sectarianism rankled deeply. Bitterness and suspicion existed on both sides, and continued to be expressed towards the United Church by Presbyterians, not only privately but through the pages of the *Record*. Thus a proposal by the United Church to seek co-operation with other Protestant denominations in reducing “injurious overlap” was seen as yet a further attempt to “destroy” Canadian Presbyterianism. Co-operation had “only been a blind to promote church union” in the past — Presbyterians would never again be “deceived” by such appeals.²³ Presbyterian apologists were ready and eager to justify their position after 1925 and Scott as editor of the *Record* and a leader in the recent struggle for survival wielded his pen effectively in the cause of defending the on-going church. A long article entitled “The Twenty Years’

Conflict for Religious Liberty” published in the *Record* of December, 1925, and January, 1926, again accused the unionists of “domination and intolerance” and then proceeded to review the history of the “disunion movement” to prove that the Presbyterian Church was not a sect but a denomination dedicated to “the ideals of Christian Unity.” Scott later used this article as the basis of his book, “*Church Union*” and the *Presbyterian Church in Canada*, published in 1928.

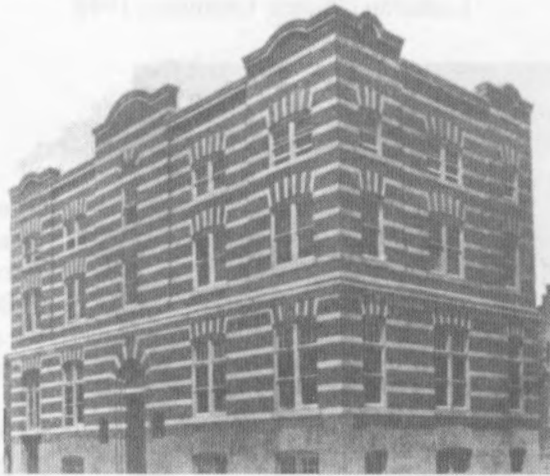
The *Record* did not normally review books but the publication of *Church Union in Canada: Its Causes and Consequences* by C. E. Silcox, director of the Institute of Social and Religious Research at New York, was the occasion for an exception to this rule. The editor, Dr. W. Rochester, stated in the issue of October, 1933, that limitation of space prevented a full review and in any case it was undesirable to rethresh old straw — nevertheless, he wrote a three-thousand-word review that filled more than three pages. The review began with praise for Silcox’s book as “a reliable work of reference.” The author had shown that the union of 1925 was not complete, that it had grown out of strife rather than unity, that continuing litigation was still a cause of contention between the two churches, and that “the ends sought by the Union, prevention of overlapping and economy, have not been reached.” The review then proceeded to show that Silcox, like the unionists, could not distinguish between union and unity, that he had belittled nonconcurring Presbyterians, that the United Church was sectarian but the Presbyterian Church was catholic. The editor concluded that this ‘reliable work of reference,’ “as an example of the scientific method...is sadly wanting and unworthy of the Institute. ...We can only say we would not have discussed these matters again had not the buried issues been raised by another....

Outside support in this trial of self-justification came from J. G. Machen, whose popularity led to invitations to preach in Canada. In April, 1926 he delivered the same address on “The Mission of The Church” at anniversary services in Knox Church, Toronto, and MacVicar Church, Montreal. At Knox Church Dr. Inkster’s two immediate predecessors, H. M. Parsons and A. B. Winchester, had each been directly involved in the American Fundamentalist movement, and although Parsons, an American, was now dead, Winchester still held the influential post of “Minister Extra Muros.” In his sermon (previously given several times in the United States and published there) Machen identified St. Paul as a conservative and Judas as a modernist, and defended controversy as the fire from which truth emerges. This provided the base for his attack on American ecumenism and antisubscriptionism, and led to his concluding praise for the Presbyterian Church in Canada as “an example to all those throughout the world who love the Lord Jesus Christ.”²⁴ Scott’s



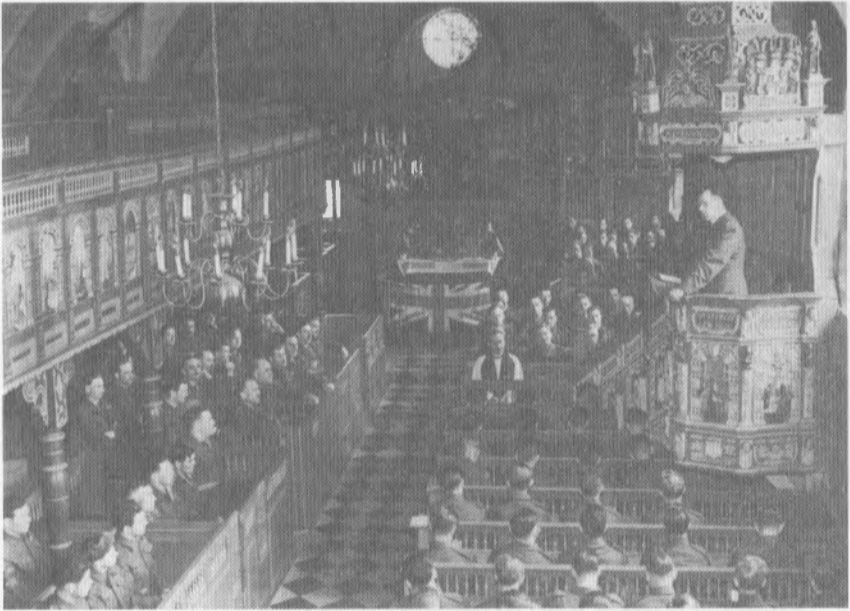
Boys Brigade

Oldest uniformed boys programme in English-speaking world.



Jewish Christian Church, Toronto

Rev. S.B. Rohold, a Christian Jew took charge of Jewish work, 1908, under the Home Mission Board. A building was erected on Elm Street, 1913. J.M. Scott revised the work until his death in the 1920s, when Morris Zeidman renamed it The Scott Mission.



Major J.W. Foote, only Empire padre to win the V.C., preaches in a Lutheran Church, Germany, 1946



**Missionaries to
Taiwan**

Back Row:

J. Dickson
and

H. Hermanson

Front Row:

D. Douglas,
Mrs. MacMillan,

I. Taylor,
and

H. MacMillan

sermon to the Assembly of 1926 struck a similar note but included a message of hope for the church which had borne its witness victorious through disunion. Scant months ago "congregations were breaking up," thousands had been made "homeless and wandering" by "iniquitous legislation, the worst miscarriage of justice and righteousness ever known among a free people," yet today the church had "a life and interest and purpose unequalled in all her history. She has lost some brick and stone, but she has gained in living stones, a spiritual temple....."²⁵

Anti-unionism had for a time brought together in common cause many people holding a wide spectrum of religious attitudes, from Principal Fraser with his liberal evangelicalism on the left to a few American-inspired Fundamentalists and premillenarians on the extreme right. In the post-union generation no theological consensus appeared in the ranks of Canadian Presbyterianism and although current changes in theological thought were represented by various prominent men in the church, no individual really held a dominating influence in the pulpits or the seminary classrooms. The tradition of biblical criticism which McFadyen had represented was in eclipse after its leading exponents departed into the United Church. With them too had gone most of the Social Gospellers whose theology had been liberal. Fundamentalists might be few within the church but they were an active, vocal, and important minority reinforced by their close relations with conservatives like J. G. Machen and certain men of the "Bible Belt" in the American mid-west. Among the "working clergy" W. G. Brown represented the traditional middle of the road conservative theology. In his published sermons he rejected both the "humanizing" of the liberals and the millenarian prophetic biblicism out of which Fundamentalism had grown.

Within Knox College and The Presbyterian College the majority of faculty members were older men who showed little interest in theological trends and seemed content to repeat well-worn lectures despite student dissatisfaction with such uninspiring material. The notable exception was W. W. Bryden of Knox, whose own theology had been much influenced by Barth's conservative "neo-orthodoxy" which, Bryden said, had driven him back to the Bible. Through his classes and his writing Bryden did much to shape and challenge a generation of younger ministers. The number of students enrolled in the two seminaries provides another measure of the progress of reconstruction after the union. By 1930 the twelve students who had remained at Knox College had grown to twenty; by 1935 this had increased to thirty-five, a figure that held fairly constant until the war. The Presbyterian College showed roughly the same pattern although the actual numbers of students were still smaller than at Knox. The twelve students in The Presbyterian College before union shrank to seven, a

number that did not increase until the Depression, but throughout the 1930s the average annual enrolment stood in the twenties.

On the eve of church union a new periodical, *The Canadian Journal of Religious Thought*, had been started as an interdenominational quarterly of articles and book reviews. In the 1924 volume nine out of twenty-six articles came from Presbyterians, but in the second volume, the year of union, only three of forty contributors were Presbyterians. During the next seven years, before the Depression forced its cancellation, the *Journal* carried only one article by a Presbyterian, although W. W. Bryden contributed fifteen book reviews. This miniscule role of Presbyterians in the life of the *Journal* was no doubt due in part to the drastically reduced size of the church and hence of potential writers, but a more important explanation must be found in the *Journal's* domination by the United Church, by liberal theology and a Social Gospel message which found so little support among Presbyterians.

The Desperate Thirties

No one could foresee that the stock market crash of 1929 would usher in an unprecedented economic depression, a catastrophe only relieved, ironically, by the coming of World War II. As world trade dried up, unemployment spread until in 1933 more than one in every five of Canada's labour force was without work. The resulting hardships and social dislocations bred despair, misery and bitterness, and the violence of frustration that engulfed the nation for a decade. In the Canadian West this economic catastrophe was compounded by several years of drought that turned the "bread basket" of North America into a dust bowl and drove a quarter of a million farmers from their lands. At the outset, however, it was confidently assumed that the depression would be short-lived, so both government and people were slow to realize the enormity of its impact. Even in 1931 the Presbyterian church was counting the progress made in the past six years and planning ways to raise an additional \$600,000 to meet the ordinary demands of the church's work. The number of ministers had now passed 700, membership had risen to 180,000, and the amounts raised for congregational, charitable, and budget purposes had all increased substantially. "Our watchword must still be forward..." said the *Record* of August, 1931.

The amount raised by the church for all purposes, however, had already declined in 1929 from the previous year and the onset of the Depression served only to confirm this trend. In 1931 this sum was almost ten per cent lower than in 1930; in 1932 it was fourteen per cent lower than in 1931; by 1933 it had fallen by one-third from the 1929 total. In 1930 the budget

deficit was \$44,000; in 1931, \$309,000 in a budget of \$600,000.²⁶ The “One Step Forward Movement” to raise \$180,000 brought in only \$62,000 in a year and a half.²⁷ Not until 1936 was there any increase in givings for all purposes, and not until 1938 was there a budget surplus.²⁸ In the same seven year period the number of congregations fell from 972 to 893. Expenditures were pared to the bone, especially for home mission work after 1931, but proposals to merge Knox and Presbyterian Colleges and to reduce the frequency of general assemblies were rejected.²⁹ Nevertheless, a balanced budget proved impossible. The *Record* of November, 1933, estimated that less than one-third of church members gave regularly, and few presbyteries ever reached their budget quotas. A Diamond Jubilee Thank Offering initiated in 1935 to raise \$206,000 brought in less than \$46,000 during a two-year campaign.³⁰ Another index of the impact of the Depression was the decline in circulation of the *Record* — by 1932 it had fallen below 40,000.

During the 1930s the *Record* expressed no opinions concerning the Depression, either with regard to causes or solutions, and such articles as did refer to the Great Depression were without exception borrowed from other sources. Similarly the church through its general assemblies avoided any direct statement except for one resolution passed in 1931. That resolution simply commended all actions “to alleviate the heavy burdens of those who through no fault of their own are faced with the many hardships resultant upon widespread unemployment due to the present economic disorganization.”³¹ The Assembly noted with approval “the apparent quickening of the public conscience in this time of need” whereby men became aware that they were their brother’s keeper and sought to avoid future economic crises by such means as unemployment insurance. The church’s official response to the Depression was the promotion of relief work by individual congregations.³² The Scott Institute in downtown Toronto was feeding up to a thousand men each day, but in 1941 it became the interdenominational Scott Mission because of policy differences between the Church and the director, Morris Zeidman, a convert from Judaism who had been appointed to the Institute soon after his graduation from Knox College in 1926.

In spite of the almost pathological fear of co-operation induced by the union experience, the church was drawn by the Depression into one interdenominational undertaking. A campaign initiated by the United Church to send freight cars of clothing and supplies to relieve suffering in the Prairies produced ten carloads from the Presbyterian Church — the United Church, which was just three times as large, sent 135.³³ Many members were still reluctant to support welfare programmes and agreed with the Rev. C. L. Cowan that the church must not become “a glorified Social-Service

Commission.”³⁴ Their emphasis remained on individual evangelization, and pleas such as that of W. G. Brown for “social action” produced no positive results.³⁵ The consistent refusal of the church to join the Social Service Council of Canada was only reversed in 1939 when the “activists” in the Assembly managed to get representatives appointed to that Council, to the Lord’s Day Alliance, and to the interdenominational Joint Committee on the Evangelization of Canadian Life.

In a speech entitled “Presbyterianism in the Twentieth Century” (serialized in the *Record*, January-April, 1936), the Rev. A. P. Dunn had emphasized the catholicity and social responsibility of Presbyterianism in the face of the continuing Depression. “The day for a narrow, sectarian viewpoint, or for a mere denominational appeal is past....Universality or catholicity is the breath of our nostrils.” Presbyterianism, he pointed out, placed the highest value on its men, and if in past it had undervalued its women the recent formation of Women’s Associations had corrected that fault. Presbyterian men and Presbyterian women were now called upon to face the social challenge of the twentieth century. “In our church, however, there are opposing tendencies, as indeed in all churches, between the evangelical who emphasizes things of the Spirit and the reformer who advocates the betterment of social conditions.” To the author this was a false and misleading polarization — Presbyterians would only be “true to our traditions when we not only meet the social challenge of our age half way, but, Bible in hand, lead the van of those who seek to bring all the kingdoms of the world into subjection to the Kingdom of Christ.”

The same ideals were voiced in the eight-point “Public Pronouncement” adopted by the Fifteenth General Council of the Alliance of Reformed Churches meeting at Montreal in 1937. Introducing the Pronouncement the Rev. William Barclay commented, “The conscience of the Church is being stirred by the world happenings of our time to a realization of the need for moral leadership. Whence could this better come than from the Churches of Christ?”³⁶ Reproduced in full in the *Record*, the Pronouncement listed the agreed beliefs of the Council and dealt with the Depression at two points. Under “Stewardship of Life and Property” the Pronouncement re-iterated that wealth should be used for public rather than “private enrichment,” and under “The Church and the Social Order” it called on the church to “keep the conscience of her people alive to the spiritual and moral aspects of our social order.” “Amid the social distress occasioned by far-reaching poverty, unemployment and inadequately rewarded labour, the Church is summoned to direct the minds of her people towards the necessity for a re-ordered social life, in default of which distress is turning to bitterness and violence.”

On behalf of the Presbyterian Church in Canada the *Record* expressed full agreement with these ideals promulgated by the Alliance.

The Canadian census of 1931 provided a fair gauge of the institutional survival of the church, although the accuracy of its statistics were inevitably challenged for denominational reasons. In a Canadian population of 10,377,000, eight per cent or 871,000 recorded themselves as Presbyterians, although the church rolls reported only 181,000 communicants.³⁷ Of this census total the Maritime provinces accounted for 80,000 or eight per cent of that region's population, Quebec 60,000 or two per cent, Ontario 451,000 or thirteen per cent, and the four western provinces 280,000 or nine per cent (with a higher average for British Columbia but a lower one for Saskatchewan). Returns of population for cities and towns of 10,000 and more reveal, however, a different dimension. Canada's four largest cities — Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver — together contained 183,000 Presbyterians or thirty per cent of the national total, with Toronto alone accounting for one of every nine Presbyterians in Canada, or more than the total in any one of the eight provinces. The towns and cities of Ontario held nearly a quarter of all Presbyterians and the seventy towns and cities of Canada, over forty per cent.³⁸

Except in Saskatchewan and the Maritimes, the proportion of Presbyterians in urban areas was higher than the national average. In every province the ratio of male to female Presbyterians was close to the average but in terms of age distribution a much higher proportion of Presbyterians were to be found in the "over forty" bracket and male Presbyterians were older than female. The notable exception regarding age groupings was Quebec where the church had managed to retain more of the younger generation, especially young families, than anywhere else in Canada, although rural Presbyterians were generally younger than urban members. From these statistics a profile emerges of the church as a body of older than average people, generally city-dwellers and heavily concentrated in Ontario. By almost every arithmetical criterion the continuing church was no longer a statistically representative Canadian institution.

The publication of these census reports in 1932 produced two overtures (from the synods of Alberta and of Montreal and Ottawa) noting that whereas the property division after 1925 had been based on a 36:64 ratio, the new statistics indicated a more accurate ratio would have been 40:60, or six per cent more favourable to the Presbyterian Church. Both synods asked the General Assembly to rectify the "great injustice" of this "unfair division" which had occasioned "a great loss," by inviting the United Church to do justice towards the Presbyterian Church, and if no action was forth-coming

to seek redress in the courts.³⁹ The *Record* had no doubt inspired these protests by its article demonstrating that the church was still more than half as large as in 1925 (a further justification for using the name Presbyterian Church in Canada) and suggesting that the ratio of the property division should have been sixty per cent for the continuing church instead of thirty-six.⁴⁰ In this revival of the numbers game (in which the secular press joined with gusto) the two synods seem to have settled for the more modest demand of a six per cent increase instead of the twenty advocated by the *Record*, but the Assembly never took up the matter.

In a series of articles for the *Record*, printed in November, 1936, and February and March, 1937, comparing the census report of 1931 with the statistical returns to the General Assembly in 1936, the Rev. W. H. Fuller produced some provocative insights into the uneven progress of the church. Church membership in proportion to the Presbyterian population was three times stronger in eastern than in western Canada. Congregations were also three times more numerous in the east than the west, although the Presbyterian population of the east was only twice as large. The church, he concluded, was not ministering as effectively to its people in the west as in the east, but even in the east “from 73% to 77% of the Presbyterian population are either only adherents to the Church, or live outside the districts where its congregations exist, or are indifferent to it.”

Fuller divided the post-union period into three phases — 1925-7 had been years of reorganization and consolidation marked by rapid growth, 1928-9 had been a brief era of consolidation and overexpansion when the rate of membership increase dropped from eleven to four per cent — “had there been no depression this could not be called over-expansion” — and finally there were the years of readjustment, 1930-5. Membership which had crested at 180,700 in 1931 had declined during the next three years, and although it rose again in 1935 the increase was less than four hundred members. In the same period over four per cent of all preaching points were closed. Despite these apparent reversals, Fuller stressed the fundamental stability of the church. “Scarcely any other sphere of national life can show as little proportionate ill effect from the depression as the Church, at least in its statistics.” The decennial census of 1941 five years later, however, indicated no marked improvement in the church’s condition. The number of Presbyterians now stood at 831,000, or 7.2 per cent of the Canadian population compared to 871,000 or 8.5 percent in 1931.

Another problem of the 1930s, unrelated to the Depression, concerned the administration and morale of Knox College. Complaints by a number of students had led the College Board to ask the Assembly of 1931 for a

commission to investigate and rectify an “intolerable” situation. The problem was apparently three-fold — a lack of administrative ability on the part of Principal Eakin, academic incompetence on the part of Professor E. L. Morrow, and a clash of personalities between these two men. The commission reported in 1932 that it had heard 167,000 words of testimony and now recommended that Eakin be removed as principal and Morrow be fired. Both of these measures were adopted, but a year later the matter was again before Assembly as a minority of the College Board opposed the action, Dr. Eakin challenged the legality of his removal as principal, and professors W. W. Bryden and J. D. Cunningham protested against misleading statements given to the press by their two colleagues. Another committee was appointed which advised the Assembly of 1934 to exchange Eakin with F. Scott Mackenzie as principals of Knox and The Presbyterian College. Ultimately Eakin remained as principal of Knox with enlarged administrative powers while Morrow’s term as professor of systematic theology was terminated in 1936.⁴¹

“Slay or be Slain”

The outbreak of World War II in September, 1939, came as no surprise — it was almost a relief from the tensions which had been building to a climax during the preceding months. In the opinion of the *Record* this war was the sole responsibility of Hitler. The fighting was expected to last four years, and however horrifying the prospect, the defence of the democracies was necessary and justified. The blatant jingoism expressed during the South African War had, however, been sobered by the unspeakable destruction of 1914-1918. In 1939 the Christian churches viewed the coming onslaught with sorrow and resignation. Five years later when commenting on the horrors that total war inflicted upon the innocent, the editor of the *Record* wrote in the issue of May, 1944, “The one thing possible to the Christian conscience in the circumstances is to go through with the hateful business without rancour or bitterness, and with the hope that the destruction of those who have brought evil upon the world will be overruled by God so as to achieve a greater good in the future.” Modern war must be seen and accepted as “an unnatural interlude in civilized existence, in which men must either slay or be slain.”

As in World War I a major contribution of the church was made through the chaplaincy service. As early as 1940 S. C. Parker, convener of the church’s committee, reported that no appeal for chaplains was needed because so many volunteers were coming forward. In fact so many offered their services that the church urged the government to raise the age limit for chaplains. In

1941 forty-four ministers were acting as chaplains with Canada's armed forces and by the end of the war that number had passed one hundred.⁴² This was an amazingly high proportion on a denominational comparison, and is paralleled by the disproportionately large number of lay Presbyterians in the army, navy and air force reported by the religious census of 1944.⁴³ One Presbyterian minister, H/Major J. W. Foote, of the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his courageous and devoted service in the tragic Dieppe raid of August, 1942, and was the only Canadian chaplain so honoured during the war.

The war had, of course, ended all mission work in Japan and Formosa, and disrupted the work in China — other fields were not directly affected by the hostilities but all missions, both foreign and home, still lay under that dark cloud of financial shortages intensified by the Depression. In 1944, however, the Rev. E. H. Johnson, secretary for missionary education, announced, "the tide has turned." "The sad task of saving the Church's finances by trimming her mission has ended. In this year for the first time since 1930 there has been a substantial increase in the estimates..."⁴⁴ That increase, eleven per cent, meant that the minimum salary for missionaries was restored to \$1,600, ministers would get a basic pay of \$1,700 and students on summer fields would receive \$15 per week. For the China mission there were sufficient volunteers but inadequate funds — other foreign fields still needed both money and workers. To reach the widely dispersed Presbyterians in Saskatchewan (there were fewer members in that province than in three Toronto churches), it was proposed to use radio broadcasts. Despite these problems it seemed that "a better day of missions" was dawning.

The formation in 1944 of the Canadian Council of Churches, of which the Presbyterian Church became a charter member, aroused misgivings and tensions among some Presbyterians. The Council represented the merging of two distinct religious streams — interdenominational co-operation through such bodies as the Christian Social Council and the Joint Committee on Evangelism, and the European ecumenical movement of the World Church. In May, 1944, the *Record* printed an article by an ex-moderator of the Church of Scotland warning that some leaders of the World Church movement believed that Christian unity must be expressed through organic union. For Canadian Presbyterians this view naturally evoked unpleasant memories of 1925, but the *Record* later published a report on the first meeting of the Canadian Council of Churches designed to allay such fears⁴⁵ and an account of a speech, "The Ecumenical Movement," delivered by the Rev. William Barclay to the council on the theme that the ecumenical ideal is a fellowship of the Spirit and therefore does not look towards organic union.⁴⁶

Another side-issue of the war years, the training of ministers, again revealed some of the inner tensions afflicting the church. With so many clergy serving as chaplains, the General Assembly of 1943 transferred the staff and students of Presbyterian College (but not its Board) to Toronto to work in conjunction with Knox College for the duration of the war. Fears were expressed in some quarters that The Presbyterian College, which was viewed as the seminary for Quebec and the Maritimes, might never be reopened separately at Montreal. The difficulties of this situation were compounded by a proposal from McGill University to create an interdenominational Faculty of Divinity. When a proposal for Presbyterian participation in this faculty was referred to the presbyteries, it was discovered that only two of thirty-three presbyteries were favourable to the idea. Montreal Presbytery expressed particularly strong disapproval, but a number of Montreal clergy and laymen issued a Manifesto in rebuttal. They argued that such a faculty would create higher educational standards than the church could achieve alone, that Presbyterian College would still teach courses on "the distinctive tenets of Presbyterianism," that the scheme was for a trial period of five years only and the deliberate absence of the Presbyterian Church would only create "an isolationism which is quite foreign to her traditions."⁴⁷

In reply to this Manifesto the opponents of co-operation in the Montreal Presbytery stated their belief that, "to place instruction in the major theological fields in the hands of a secular institution, under the guidance of an interdenominational committee will ultimately lead to the destruction of the historic theological position of The Presbyterian Church in Canada."⁴⁸ Participation in the Divinity Faculty would end the church's control over the education of its ministers and the Manifesto's argument against "isolationism" was only the argument of the Presbyterian unionists before 1925. "If we should adopt such an attitude of theological indifference we are opening our doors to a fifth-column church-union movement which will lead to our destruction as a Reformed Church." G. C. Cowan, a Presbyterian College student serving overseas, denied that the McGill proposal was either a sinister scheme" of the United Church to subvert Presbyterianism or a "sinister plan" of the "supposed wholly agnostic McGill Senate" to replace "the fundamental truths of Christ...with scientific humanism."⁴⁹ His main concern, however, was to refute the fears of some admirers of Karl Barth that co-operation in McGill would be a victory for natural theology. Cowan's own battle experience had helped him to separate "the fundamental issues from the trivial, progress from recession, positiveness from prejudice..." For him personally the bitter experience of 1925 must not be allowed to warp or deform the church's enduring witness to its historic mission.

In a similar vein G. A. Campbell, chairman of the Board of The Presbyterian College, wrote in the *Record* of June, 1944, "I would be glad to see a Faculty of Divinity established at McGill University, but I would deeply regret if the establishment of such a faculty were to occasion acrimonious discussion by Presbyterians of different minds, such as occurred in the fateful years of 1924, 1925 and 1926." The rank and file laity entered the continuing argument when A. R. Kinnear denounced both the helpless fatalism of Barthian theology and the Fundamentalists' ideal of separateness which would, "if realized, reduce our Church to a reactionary, obscurantist sect from which intelligent Presbyterians, both old and young, would be alienated and for which non-Presbyterians would cease to have any serious regard."⁵⁰ In the end the issue of Presbyterian participation in the McGill Faculty of Divinity was resolved by the General Assembly of 1945 when an overture from the Presbytery of Hamilton, effectively rejecting cooperation, was adopted by a vote of 53 to 51.⁵¹

In the closing stages of the war the faculty of Knox College underwent an almost total reorganization. In 1944 D. W. Hay came from Scotland to fill the chair in systematic theology vacated by Morrow eight years earlier. After Principal Eakin retired along with Cunningham in 1944, Bryden, the only remaining professor, was made principal the following year, when J. S. Glen was appointed to New Testament in Cunningham's place and D. K. Andrews to Eakin's field of Old Testament. Together this enlarged faculty, with so many younger scholars, provided a solid academic basis for the College's work in training ministers as the church approached the post-war period. The Presbyterian College, however, was slower in regaining stability. Although its removal to Toronto had been a temporary measure, the future remained uncertain and administrative problems, exacerbated by the debate over participation in the McGill Faculty of Divinity, hampered long-range planning. W. Harvey-Jellie retired from the chair of Old Testament in 1944, Robert Lennox being appointed his successor in 1946. Frank Beare, professor of church history, was granted leave of absence in 1944 and later tendered his resignation, while D. J. Fraser was also nearing retirement. By the time that the College returned to Montreal in the fall of 1946 with a sharply reduced enrolment, recruitment and restaffing had become its top priorities.

Throughout the war years church membership showed a small but constant decrease — from nearly 175,000 in 1940 to 172,000 in 1944. During the same period the number of ministers fell slightly, from 761 to 747. On the credit side the amount raised for all purposes reversed its previous steady decline in 1941 — budget receipts for 1942 were the highest in a decade — and showed a steady gain of about eight per cent thereafter.⁵² Since very

few presbyteries met their budget allocations (a pattern firmly fixed during the Depression) this increase meant that the remaining presbyteries were at last coming closer to their target figures. In 1940 only two presbyteries out of forty-seven exceeded their allocations; eleven did not reach the half-way mark and one raised less than seven per cent, but in 1944 four surpassed their quotas and only one failed to reach fifty per cent.⁵³ The Foundation Fund was created in 1943 to pay off the accumulated church deficit of \$500,000 and in two years almost half the required amount was raised.⁵⁴

On the financial side the church might have some reason to rejoice as the long war reached its closing stages, but on the larger scene it was not merely failing to keep up with the expansion of Canada's population, it was losing numbers absolutely. The Presbyterian Church in 1945 remained very much what it had been a generation earlier — the church of an urban minority, predominantly English-speaking and "Anglo-Saxon," heavily concentrated in the eastern and central provinces. In 1926 it had had forty-five presbyteries — in 1946 it reported only one more. Its membership in 1926 had been 160,000 — twenty years later that figure had grown only by one per cent, a figure that could not be, like finances, blamed on the Depression. Obviously the church had failed to retain a proportionate measure of that dynamism and popular appeal which had less than two generations earlier made it the largest Protestant denomination in the Dominion. These were hard, cold and cruel facts of life from which no comfort could be drawn as the Presbyterian Church in Canada faced the challenges and opportunities of the post-war era.