

Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada

Report of the Annual Meeting

Lord Dorchester and the Church of England

A. H. Young

Volume 5, Number 1, 1926

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/300541ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/300541ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Canadian Historical Association/La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0317-0594 (print)

1712-9095 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Young, A. H. (1926). Lord Dorchester and the Church of England. *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association / Rapport de l'assemblée annuelle de la Société historique du Canada*, 5(1), 60–65.

<https://doi.org/10.7202/300541ar>

LORD DORCHESTER AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

By Professor A. H. YOUNG, Trinity College, Toronto

Because of his resistance to the unwarranted aggressions of certain representatives of the Church of England, both official and unofficial, and because of his neglect of the duty enjoined upon him in regard to the Church by successive Royal Instructions, there have not been wanting persons to suppose that Sir Guy Carleton, K.C.B., Lord Dorchester, was not a member of the Church. That, however, was far from being the case, as is proved by an entry in the journal of the first Bishop of Nova Scotia, Dr. Charles Inglis. (*Public Archives of Canada*, M., p. 159.)

"On Friday," wrote the Bishop, "I held a Confirmation, at which two of Lord Dorchester's sons were confirmed. On Sunday, I administered the Communion, [at] which his Lordship, Lady Dorchester and those two sons, received the Sacrament."

In 1766, the year of the commencement of his term of office as Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Guy's troubles with the clerics began. On June 17 the Revd. John Brook, military chaplain at Quebec, who, in the year preceding, had been appointed also to be Deputy Auditor of the Provincial Revenues, had the presumption to present to the Executive Council of the province a petition "claiming the Bishop's Palace and the Bishop's Lands for the Bishop of London and requesting a grant of the same to himself and his successors." (*Leg. Coun. Book B.*, p. 184.)

At a still earlier date, shortly after the capitulation of Montreal, the Revd. John Ogilvie, of Albany, who had accompanied Sir Jeffrey Amherst's army as chaplain to the Royal American Regiment, and who, in the next four years, built up in the city a considerable congregation of merchants and military men, had given to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts more or less detailed information about the estates of the Récollets, the Jesuits, and the Sulpicians. These, he thought, would form an excellent endowment for the Church of England. (*S.P.G. Original Letters and Journals.*)

This suggestion, apparently, was duly passed on to His Majesty's confidential servants, by whom it was seriously considered. (*Public Archives of Canada, Shelburne MSS.*, Vol. 59, p. 48). Happily, however, it seems to have been rejected; but, in spite of that fact, the claim already mentioned was put forward.

In the same year, 1766, arrived from England, with mandamuses to be given patents as rectors respectively of Quebec, Three Rivers, and Montreal, Messrs de Montmollin, Veyssièrè, and de Lisle. They expected, of course, to receive under their patents the lands, tythes, and powers which had belonged to the French rectors before 1759. The Lieutenant-Governor instituted them, however, with a salary of £200 only, informing the authorities at home that he had issued to them patents under which they would be able to do the least possible harm.

These French-speaking rectors were sent out as the result of a recommendation made to Government and to the S.P.G. by General Murray, the Governor in Chief. (*Q.* 49, pp. 343-348). He alleged, though on what grounds it is difficult to say, that there was a large number of French Protestants who would benefit from the ministrations of clergymen who spoke their own language, adding that, probably, the Roman Catholic inhabitants would by these means be induced to change their ecclesiastical allegiance.

If such hopes were to be realized, some better instruments were necessary than a "reformed Jesuit" and a former Récollet, which de Montmollin and Veyssièrè were said to be. By only one writer is the latter favourably mentioned—the man who wrote the paragraph in the *Quebec Gazette* announcing his conversion, a somewhat sudden affair, managed, it was stated, by the Revd. John Brook. De Montmollin appears generally in a much better light as a rule, but, according to a certain Mr. Morgan who, in 1786, handed in a report on the state of the Church in Canada, he was keeping "a little dirty dram shop, and himself so scandalously indecent, as to measure out and sell rum to the soldiers of the garrison." (*Q.* 26, p. 59).

This state of things, notwithstanding the lack of French hearers, the increase of the English population, and the Royal Instructions, the Governor allowed to continue for twenty-three years, less the eight which

intervened between his first and his second tenure of the Governorship-in-Chief. The pertinent section of the Instructions reads:—"And if any Person hereafter preferred to a Benefice shall appear to you to give Scandal, either by his Doctrine or Manners, you are to use the best Means for his Removal." The situation was changed only in 1789, when the Bishop of Nova Scotia held his first, and only, visitation in Quebec.

That visitation was attended by all the Anglican clergymen of the province excepting a Mr. Bryan, whom Lord Dorchester had stationed at Cornwall, with an annual allowance from Government of £50. So little did he concern himself with doing his duty in the matter of seeing that this gentleman had "a certificate from the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London, of his being conformable to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England, and of good life and conversation," that it was left for the Revd. John Stuart to find out that he was not a clergyman at all. Stuart, having been appointed at the visitation to be Bishop's Commissary for the Upper Country, stopped at Cornwall on his way home to Kingston to inspect Bryan's Letters of Orders, which, on the face of them, were a forgery, being signed "Edward Bath."

Stuart, who was something of a diplomat, had, on the occasion of his visit to Quebec to be present at the Bishop's visitation, approached the Governor with a view to obtaining his countenance to a petition for a considerable tract of land round about the King's Mills at Kingston. This he and his Wardens and Vestry thought would make an admirable endowment for the Church which they were desirous to build in readiness against the establishment at Kingston of the capital of the new province to whose creation they were looking forward.

Just what the Governor said has not been left on record, but it assuredly was of a character to raise Stuart's hopes for a favourable reply to the petition, which, after the lapse of a year and three months, was rejected. (*Parish Register of Kingston, U.C., 1785-1811*). Neither at Kingston nor elsewhere within the limits of his government did Dorchester at any time take the trouble to obey the Royal Instructions to see that Churches were erected.

When it came to a question of exercising patronage, it was quite a different matter. Then he was ready to remember that the Royal Instructions empowered him to act, even though the Bishop might have views differing from his own. Such an occasion presented itself when a successor had to be found to the Revd. David Chadbrand de Lisle, deceased, the first Anglican rector of Montreal. The Bishop of Quebec, Dr. Jacob Mountain, desired the post for his brother, but Dorchester appointed the Revd. James Tunstall, giving as his reason that he "had been sent there about four years ago at the request of the Bishop of Nova Scotia under all the assurances that could be given here of succeeding to that Gentleman's [de Lisle's] preferments." "And his character," he continued, "is such in every respect as to induce me to recommend him to His Majesty's Approbation as Chaplain"—to the Garrison of Montreal. (*Q. 68, p. 154*). The sequel proved, unfortunately, that the gubernatorial judgment was again lacking in the quality of infallibility.

When the desirability of appointing an Anglican Bishop for each of the Canadas, or for the two conjointly, was being considered, Dorchester seems to have favoured the latter alternative. For the office he recommended the Revd. Philip Toosey, rector of Quebec, Bishop's Commissary,

or Official, for the Eastern District of Canada, and sometime tutor to his Sons, like Mgr. Bailly de Messein, Bishop of Capsa, whom, to his undoing, he procured to be coadjutor to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Quebec.

Col. Simcoe, who wanted to have a See of Upper Canada erected, with a Bishop of its own, nominated the Revd. Samuel Peters, D.D., a "suffering Loyalist." Both he and Toosey were passed over in favour of the Revd. Jacob Mountain, a presbyter in the Diocese of Lincoln and a friend of Mr. Pitt, who promised that he should be called to the Legislative Councils of the two Provinces with the title of Lord Bishop, which up to that time had not yet been conferred upon the Bishop of Nova Scotia.

To the title, which was conferred under section VI of the Constitutional Act and which has set the fashion for that of Colonial Bishops throughout the world, Dorchester objected, as he did also to the seat on the Councils, which led, as he foresaw it would, to political complications. Writing to the Right Honble Henry Dundas on May 25, 1794, he said:—

"At the same time I must Observe it will awaken much jealousy on the part of the Canadians, that their Bishop does not receive the same Honor.

"They well know their great superiority in Numbers and are sensible of every preference; the proportion of Militia to be furnished by the British is only Seventy out of Two Thousand, and this will not escape Observation, and every Member of the Council will think himself humbled if he had not the same Honor conferred on himself." (*Q. 71, I, p. 6*).

The reply from the Duke of Portland, on August 13 following, ran thus:—

"I do not think that the Mandamus directing the Bishop of Quebec, for the time being, to be summoned to the Legislative Councils of Upper and Lower Canada, by the same style and Title, by which Bishops in England are distinguished, can contain any reasonable Ground of Jealousy.

"It will be for His Majesty's Consideration, whether a Seat in the Legislative Council of Lower Canada should not be given to the Roman Catholick Bishop of Quebec, should your Lordship recommend such a measure. But to suppose that every Member of the Legislative Council will think himself humbled, if he has not the same honor conferred upon him, would be in fact, to interfere with the authority given to His Majesty by the Canada Act, with regard to granting Titles of Honour to Members of the Legislative Council, in the exercise of which Authority in such instances of peculiar service to His Majesty's Government, as may be worthy of being represented to His Majesty, your Lordship will be sensible that His Majesty must, and ought to remain the sole Judge." (*Q. 68, p. 132*).

An undeserved snub this was for a man who, notwithstanding his frankly expressed desire to be allowed to use his own discretion in ecclesiastical affairs, had made the suggestion that the Roman Catholics should receive as a matter of the King's own grace an honour for their Bishop, which, sooner or later, might have to be conceded in response to demands for it.

Through some neglect in England, Dr. Mountain's Mandamus was not received in Quebec till many months after his own arrival. When at length he did take his seat in Council and assume his title of Lord Bishop, he proceeded to clamour for the payment of tythes, the establishment of rectories, the right of presentation to them, the building of Churches, and the power of issuing marriage licenses, some of which were contemplated by the Constitutional Act and some specifically reserved to the Governor. In none of his endeavours did he receive the slightest countenance from Lord Dorchester, or, for that matter, from succeeding Governors down to the end of his episcopate and of his life, in 1825. Yet the demand mentioned was entirely proper, especially in view of the fact that, in Que-

bec, Three Rivers, and Montreal, Anglicans were still compelled to trespass upon the rights and to wound the sensibilities of the Roman Catholics so far as Churches in which to hold their services were concerned.

Dr. Mountain's attitude toward the Church of Scotland and the Clergy Reserves, provided for in the Constitutional Act, it was that laid the foundation of the infamous quarrel over the Reserves, which for sixty years or so embittered the feeling of thousands on both sides of the dispute. One may be permitted to wonder what effect upon the ultimate settlement may have been produced by the precedent set by action which Lord Dorchester took, after consulting with the Colonial Secretary.

Wishing to allow a Government stipend to the ministers of the Church of Scotland in Quebec and Montreal, to begin with, he asked for permission to do so. Permission, he was told, was not necessary, this being a matter which lay entirely within his own discretion, provided that stipends were asked for. "For your Lordship will recollect," Dundas went on, "in framing the Canada Act, that the reservation for the Church & the Crown in all Grants of Land, was fixed at a larger proportion than was originally intended, with a view to enable the King to make from those Reservations, such an allowance to Presbyterian Ministers, Teachers and Schools, as His Majesty should from time to time, think proper." (*Q. 67, pp. 49 and 73*).

How much better it would have been if the intention of the framers of the Act had been expressly stated in it, or, better still, perhaps, if, in accordance with the prayer of the petition forwarded by Dorchester to Lord Sydney in behalf of Sir John Johnson and others representing the new Loyalist settlers on the upper St. Lawrence, in 1787, the Church of Scotland had been formally established alongside of the Church of England! (*Q. 27, 2, p. 989*).

In intimating the outcome of this application in regard to salaries for the Scottish ministers, Lord Dorchester was quite frank with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. He had been equally frank in 1787 in regard to the allowance to the Revd. John Bethune, formerly of Montreal but then of Williamstown and Cornwall, a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, who had served throughout the war of 1776-1782 as chaplain to the 84th, Royal Highland Emigrants Regiment. Nor, so far as records examined show, was any objection urged at the time.

In 1789 the question of establishing a university for Canada was being discussed. Taking advantage of the presence of the Bishop of Nova Scotia in Quebec for the purpose of visiting his clergy belonging to the Province, Lord Dorchester appears to have asked him to get resolutions in favour of his plan passed and sent to him. This was done, though it is probable that both Bishop and clergy would have preferred an institution such as King's College, Windsor, which had been established by the Bishop the year before, to the secularist university contemplated by the Governor in Council. As they could not set up at once the Divinity School, which it was thought each of the three Communion ought to set up independently for the training of its own clergy, they would have either to train prospective ordinands themselves or to send them to Nova Scotia or to England. Thus again Lord Dorchester failed the Church of England, notwithstanding his Instructions, in a matter vital to her wellbeing, albeit he could not very well find the necessary money when so many demands were being made upon the Treasury at home.

From the incidents cited it is clear that the Church of England has no reason to look back to the administrations of Lord Dorchester as to

a time at which her interests were promoted or even regarded up to the limit of the Royal Instructions. For the period before the advent of the Loyalists there is some excuse, inasmuch as he was rightly unwilling to forward the establishment of a "Protestant" State Church for a very small minority of the inhabitants, especially at the expense of another Communion and in opposition to the religious sentiments of a majority suffering at almost every point from the arrogance of not a few of the newcomers. After the arrival of the Loyalists, however, the case was different, even if by no means all of them were Anglicans. Then, the relations between Church and State being what they were, he ought to have obeyed his Instructions at least to the extent of seeing to it that Churches, sufficient salaries, and clergymen of blameless life were provided. Tythes, rectories, rights of presentation, and the like, which, unfortunately, appeared to the first Anglican Bishop of Quebec to be of prime importance, could well afford to wait to be settled by later generations.