

Historic Meeting Held on January 22, 1918

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News

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By MC Havey, Archivist

As early as 1916, a serious attempt was made to create an English-Canadian Province. Following numerous letters continuing to encourage the establishment of a Canadian Province, Extraordinary Visitor Fr. Thomas Brown, Provincial Superior of the St. Louis Province, called a special meeting in Buffalo, NY. Before the meeting on January 22, 1918, Fr. Brown wrote: "I think we can regard its establishment as assured." The Toronto Vice-Province was represented by Fr. Patrick Mulhall, Vice-Provincial, consultants Frs. Arthur Coughlan and Sinon Grogan while Fr. E.M. Weigel, socius of the Baltimore Province recorded the minutes of the meeting. Fr. Mulhall presented a petition, outlining the rationale and details for the formation of a Canadian Province to Fr. Thomas Brown. Part of the petition follows:

- a) The Baltimore Province offers no objection, on the contrary advocates it.
- b) Canadians to a man favour the project and are convinced that a distinct Province will serve to foster many vocations to the C.Ss.R.
- c) At present parents willing to let their boys join the Congregation, and the boys anxious to become Redemptorists hesitate or abandon the idea on account of the very long distances from home and are averse to having these boys educated in the U.S.
- d) Encouraging prospects are held out that wealthy Canadians will contribute liberally, once it is known that the new Province will be exclusively for Canadians. Without a shadow of doubt, vocations will be numerous, as there is every reason to believe.
- e) As now constituted, the Vice-Province has sufficient number of Canadian Fathers (52), who are capable of filling the various offices required for the administration of a Province. (In 1918, there were 52 priests, 18 professed students and 13 professed Brothers.)
- f) Regarding the financial status, it is a matter of record that the Eastern houses, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec and Saint John, are entirely free of debt while London soon will be rid of all encumbrances. The Western houses are heavily burdened with debts.

The petition also outlined the proposed future foundations, novitiate and nominations for the houses.

At the meeting's conclusion, Fr. Brown "called attention to the necessity of putting all the points in writing so as to present a full report to Rome."

Celebrations Held Twenty Five Years Later

Twenty five years after that meeting, celebrations began on January 18, 1944 for the silver jubilee of the Toronto Province at St. Alphonsus seminary, Woodstock, Ontario. The entry on January 18 of the Woodstock chronicles stated:

The first visitors arrived last night. The others kept arriving today so that all the invited guests were here for the play, *Shadow and Substance*, presented by the students and directed by Father (John) Gallagher. The visitors from our own Province were principally Rectors and Superiors on their way to the Provincial Consultations in Montreal.

The following is a list of visitors: Most Rev. G. Murray, Very Rev. J. Fuller, Provincial of the Toronto Province; M. Gearin, Provincial of Baltimore Province; F. Fagen, Provincial of St. Louis Province; L. LaPlante, Provincial of Ste. Anne de Beaupre. Other American visitors: R.P. Hochard, Licking, Byrne, E. Murphy, Malloy, M. Miller, R. McDonald, Ott, Washington, Huber, Kenny. Other Ste. Anne de Beaupre visitors: R.P. Ferland, Bourbeau, Routhier, Lussier.

The entry on January 19 outlined the events of the commemoration:

Solemn Mass was celebrated at 8:30 by Very Rev, J. Fuller; Very Rev. M. Gearin was Deacon and Very Rev. LaPlante was Subdeacon. Bishop Murray preached. The seminary choir sang.

At 11:00 a.m., Fr. Daly read a paper entitled, *Memoir on the Origins of the Toronto Province*.

At 12:00 – A banquet in honour of Silver Jubilee of Priesthood of R.P Provincial (James Fuller). Very Rev. J. Dwyer presided. Very R. J. Kane delivered the principal address. Other speakers were Very Rev. Frs. Gearin, Fagen, and LaPlante. Very Rev. J. Fuller, the Jubilarian, was the last speaker.

At 3:30 p.m., Rev. F. Coghlan read a paper, *The Western Expansion of the Toronto Province*. After a short intermission, Father Provincial gave a talk, "Our West in Slides."

Pontifical Benediction at 6:00 p.m. closed the celebration.



Seated (left to right) – Frs. A. Hochard, M. Miller, St. Louis Provincial Superior Francis Fagan , *Toronto Provincial Superior James Fuller, *Bishop Gerald Murray of Saskatoon, Baltimore Provincial Superior Michael Gearin, Beaufre Provincial Superior Leon LaPlante, Fr. A. Ferland, *Fr. George Daly.

Standing Below Steps: S. Goetz, Madigan, Licking, O. Dietz, R. McKenna, Huber, Hayes, W. Mann, Routhier, J. Dwyer, *T. Murphy, W. Murphy, *J.F. Coghlan, D. O'Donnell, *J. Vallieres, D. Ehman, C. Brocklehurst, J. Molloy, Boulet, J. Cunningham, C. Johnson, L. Rolls, *P. Gallery, L. Feehan, W. James, Harper, P. Fisher, R. Powers, D. Egan.

On Steps (beginning lowest step) – W. Kroetsch, J. Murphy, Bourbeau, * W. McCullough, E. Coholan, *J. Barry, Joseph Murphy, Kenny, Doucet.

— Mallett, Lussier, R. Cain, G. Redmond, H. Fleming, L. Sexsmith, J. Coffey, Washington
 — *J. Gallagher , *G. Koster, C. DeVine, A. McCann, *D. Coll, P. Collison, C. Killingsworth, M. Blackmore

— G. Murphy, R. McKenna, Bro. Dominic, J. Spicer, J. Muldoon, J. Lambert

— J. Byrne, M. Meehan, *F. Hill, Br. John Adams

— B. Johnson, C. McElligott, J. Harrington, R. McDonald, Arsenault, R. Conway, J. O'Deady, R. Bedard

On top Platform (left to right) – Monaghan, J. Glavine, Br. Clement – J. Dieges, J. Phelan, Br. Allan MacDonald, Br. George, R. Delaney, A. Thomas, K. Stephens, T. Chidlow, *F. Cunerty, G. Owens, O'Connor, Br. Augustine, G. Campbell, T. Coyne, L. Murphy, Br. Paul, R. Connaughton, J. Boyle, Tobin

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