

**A Sketch of the Life and Times of the Right
Reverend Angus Bernard MacEachern,
the First Bishop of the Diocese
of Charlottetown**

by
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A sketch of the life and times of the Right Rev. Angus¹ (or Æneas) Bernard MacEachern, a pioneer missionary priest and the first Bishop of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, may be of interest to members and friends of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association. He was born in Scotland in 1759, thirteen years after the Battle of Culloden, when the penal laws against Catholics in the British Isles were as severe as they were in the times of Elizabeth and Cromwell. His seminary training was received in Spain; education was then denied Catholics in England, Ireland and Scotland, and professional training, in particular, training for the priesthood, had been expressly forbidden under pain of death ever since penal laws against Catholics were instituted and which were to continue until close to the end of the eighteenth century, a period of about 250 years. He came to Prince Edward Island in the year 1790 when it was still called St. John's Island. He endured innumerable hardships and privations in attending to the spiritual needs of the Catholics of Prince Edward Island, of Cape Breton Island, parts of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. He was made a Bishop in the year 1819. He founded a classical college; its successor is now a University; and after forty-five years of missionary work he died at the age of 76 years, worn out by his labours for the care of souls scattered over a territory occupying a great part of the present Maritime Provinces of Canada.

Bishop MacEachern laid the foundations of the Diocese of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, which, in proportion to its population, is believed to have given more vocations to the religious life than any other Diocese in North America. It is not known, with certainty, the number of young ladies from the Diocese who have entered the religious life and become teachers or nurses, or who did, or are doing other types of service in convents throughout Canada and the United States and other countries, but the number is large, in proportion to the population of the Diocese, judging by those who have become members of one religious congregation of women, namely the

¹ The name Angus is the Anglicized form of the Gaelic name Æneas.

Congregation of Notre Dame, whose Mother House is in Montreal. Mother St. Gerald, Assistant to the Mother General of the Congregation de Notre Dame, and herself an Islander, looked up the records and found that over three hundred members of their order had been born and educated on Prince Edward Island up to the present time.

Father James Donahoe, Pastor of St. Bridget's Parish, Minneapolis, in the state of Minnesota, U.S.A., who was born and educated on Prince Edward Island, in the 1935 edition of his book entitled "Prince Edward Island Priests" gives with biographical sketches, an impressive list of one hundred and one priests, bishop and archbishops, who were born on Prince Edward Island but who labored or are laboring in the Sacred Ministry outside of their native province, in Dioceses on the mainland of Canada and the United States. Father Donahoe states that his list is incomplete, as there were a number who failed to give him the necessary permission for inclusion; neither did Father Donahoe include those bishops and priests who practised their sacred ministry on Prince Edward Island; his purpose being to tell about the life and work of priests and bishops who labored outside their native province. For that reason, he did not include Bishop MacEachern, the first Bishop, or his seven successors, or the hundreds of priests who gave service in the Diocese of Charlottetown itself. If then there is a Canadian Province, the smallest of the nine, with a population in the year 1941 of 95,047; of which 42,743 or less than 45% of the total are Catholics; if this the smallest, and only Island Province of Canada, has given to the Catholic Church more vocations to the religious life, in proportion to size and population, than any other diocese of Canada or the United States; if, in addition to the nuns and priests, bishops and archbishops who were born and received their college education on the Island and who labored either in their native diocese or in other dioceses in Canada or the United States, the first Cardinal of the English speaking Catholics of Canada, in the person of His Eminence Cardinal McGuigan, is also a native of Prince Edward Island, then there must be reasons for these visible manifestations of grace among a comparatively small number of Catholic people; perhaps one of the reasons may be found in the life and work of the first Bishop of Charlottetown, the Right Rev. Angus (or Æneas) Bernard MacEachern.

The Diocese of Charlottetown since 1842 comprises the Province of Prince Edward Island and the Magdalen Islands, which Islands are situated about fifty miles north of the Eastern part of Prince Edward Island in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Politically the Magdalen Islands are part of the Province of Quebec, and are represented by one member in the Provincial parliament of that province. The total Catholic population of the Diocese of Charlottetown in 1945 was 46,426; 42,743 are on Prince Edward Island and 3,683 on the Magdalen Islands. The diocesan clergy number 79; there are also six priests of the Redemptorist order labouring in the Diocese. The number of churches with resident priests is 47, and missions with churches 12. From October

1946, the Magdalen Islands will form part of the Diocese of Gaspé, Quebec, according to notification from Rome appearing in the Press.

Prince Edward Island in the southern part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence is somewhat crescent shaped, about 145 miles long and from 3 to 30 miles wide, with many indentations of the sea along its coastline; in area it is 2,184 square miles, containing over one million acres of red colored, well-cultivated soil; there is no great wealth and there is no poverty among the people; two essential and basic industries engage the great majority of the population, namely, farming and fishing; the Island has no coal or oil or iron or other minerals; there are no great waterways to produce electric power; and because of the absence of these, there is no so called "Industrial expansion" with its attendant evils.

According to the Federal census of 1941, the population along religious and racial lines is divided as follows:

	TOTAL	CATHOLICS	PROTESTANTS
Indians	258	258	0
French	14,799	14,485	314
Scotch	32,669	8,489	24,180
Irish	18,459	16,017	2,442
English	27,383	3,155	24,228
Other Races	<u>1,479</u>	<u>339</u>	<u>1,149</u>
Total population of P.E.I.	95,047	42,743	52,304

The census of 1941 showed that the Protestant population of the Island is divided into about ten sects of which the United Church of Canada with about 24,000 adherents, the Presbyterians 14,700, and the Anglicans and Baptists with 5,000 each, are the largest groups; of the Catholic population, those of Irish descent form the largest number with 16,017 people, the French have 14,485; the Scotch 8,459; the English 3,155; Catholics whose ancestry is mainly from the British Isles number about 28,000; Catholics of French origin number 14,485, all of whom speak English and the majority speak French, the language of their ancestors. The population of the Island during the past seventy-five years has not exceeded 108,000 and has not gone below 85,000; the proportion of Catholics to Protestants during that period remained substantially what it is at the present time.

The Micmac Indians, a branch of the Algonquins, were the original inhabitants of Prince Edward Island. They were the first to give the Island a name: it was Abegwet, meaning "rocked by the Waves"; it is claimed the Indians also called their Island home Minegoo which means "The Island" thus anticipating, by about four hundred years, the marked tendency of natives of the only insular Province of Canada to speak of it as if no other island

existed; St. John's Island (Isle Saint Jean) was the name bestowed by the French; it is generally held that the French navigator and explorer Jacques Cartier, who sailed from St. Malo in Brittany, France, in April of 1534, was the leader of the first group of Europeans to set foot on the Island, with the view of claiming it for the crown of France; he first saw the north shore of the eastern part of the Island towards the end of June of 1534 and his three small ships skirted the shoreline in a westerly direction until he lost sight of the land; he and his crew landed at different places along the north coast of the Island and in his written account of his findings he was well pleased with what he saw. He did not know then, that he had discovered an island. St. John's Island remained a possession of France from 1534 to 1763 a period of 229 years; in 1763 the Island became a British colony; in 1873, it became a Province of Confederated Canada. In the view of this writer, Canada, since the year 1931, when the Statute of Westminster was passed by the Imperial Parliament, has as much ownership of England as England has of Canada; in other words Canada including Prince Edward Island is now owned by Canada and Canadians. Although St. John's Island was a colony of France for 229 years and a colony of England, for 168 years up to 1931, neither of these rival imperial powers did much, in an official way, to colonize it. Nova Scotia or Acadia, as one of the pawns on the imperial chessboard, between France and England, by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, was ceded to Britain and hence had been a British possession for fifty years longer than the rest of present day Canada. Nominally the French inhabitants of Nova Scotia became subjects of Britain from 1713. Before the outbreak of the Seven Years War, it was decided to deport over six thousand Acadian French from Nova Scotia. This was in the year 1755. Two deportations took place from what is, now known as the Maritime Provinces of Canada. The story of the Nova Scotia deportation was told to the world, in verse, by the American poet Longfellow, in the year 1847, nearly one hundred years after the crime had been committed. Many have been the efforts on the part of "official historians" to bring forward extenuating circumstances in justification of British action on that occasion; and nearly two hundred years have elapsed since that great wrong was done by the conquerors against the conquered but in the minds of people actuated by a sense of justice the story rankles and will continue to do so.

A mass deportation, with pillaging of property and abuses to over two thousand French, was again carried out by the British in December of the year 1758, from what is now the Province of Prince Edward Island. After the British had destroyed Louisbourg, Amherst, the commander of the British, forges, sent Andrew, the fifth Lord Rollo (a bay on the East Coast of Prince Edward Island, in the parish of St. Alexis, bears his name) with 500 men to take possession of the Island. Amherst's written instructions to Rollo were in part as follows: "I would have the settlements in the different parts of this

Island absolutely destroyed. It may be done in a quiet way but pray let them be entirely demolished.”

Amherst appointed Whitmore as a sort of overseer and governor of the Island at the time of the deportation, and this man, writing to Pitt the Prime Minister of Britain, in the late autumn of the year 1758, states there are about 2,200 of the inhabitants of St. John's Island already embarked; but Lord Rollo, who was sent there with a detachment of 500 men to see them all embarked, writes me that much against his inclination, he is compelled to leave the inhabitants of a whole parish behind”. The “whole parish” that was not evacuated and its church destroyed was Malpecque, on the north shore with about three hundred people and far removed from the other four parishes of Port la Joie, St. Louis, St. Peter's and Fortune Bay (Rollo Bay) whose churches were burnt to the ground, the cattle evacuated, and the people put on nine transports.

The mass deportation of Grandpré and other Acadian parishes in Nova Scotia in 1755, amounting to over 6,000 was along the Atlantic seaboard for the most part; that of 1758 from Prince Edward Island was across the Atlantic in the month of December; two of the transports, doubtful as to being seaworthy before they departed for the Atlantic crossing, in a season of the year when winter storms are common, were lost at sea. The *Violet*, the smaller of the two, went down with over four hundred victims on December 12, 1758. The larger, *the Duke William*, sank on the following day. According to a rambling account in Wariburton's *History of Prince Edward Island*, the *Duke William* had begun to leak water shortly after leaving the Gut of Canso but kept on her way; her prisoners were kept busy at the pumps. A storm of several days duration as it reached the English Channel produced such a critical state of affairs that the Captain and his crew and an aged priest put off from the doomed vessel, twenty-seven in the long boat and nine in the cutter, leaving the Acadian men, women and children to their fate. The boats, with Captain and crew intact, reached Penzance near Land's End, England, the next day. The unseaworthy *Duke William* with her hundreds of people deported from their peaceful homes on St. John's Island was lost.

Nearly two hundred years have passed since those mass deportations followed each other by only three years. Most writers on the subject are inclined to think that while both are impossible to defend from the point view of justice, yet the deportation from St. John's Island had features which make it an even more disgraceful instance of cruelty and of man's inhumanity to man than the larger deportation from Nova Scotia.

The next event in the history of Prince Edward Island, insofar as this sketch is concerned, has to do with Scotland and the Catholic migration of the year 1772 from that country, which brought over the parents and some of the relatives of, but not the future Bishop MacEachern, along with over two hundred Highlanders under the leadership of Captain John MacDonald; he was the grandfather of the late Sir William Christopher MacDonald, McGill

University's greatest financial benefactor. Thirty-one years later, in the year 1803, there was a much larger migration from Scotland and its Western Isles, and Ireland, to Prince Edward Island under the leadership of the Earl of Selkirk who has left other marks of his colonizing policy in Canada.

In the Seven Years War (1756-1763) Protestant England, as an ally of Protestant Prussia, and Catholic France, as a supporter of Catholic Austria – Prussia and Austria being the chief antagonists – enlarged what was at first a mid-European conflict into a world war, producing a colossal struggle for control of Indian, African and North American Colonies. England emerged victorious because of her superior sea power. She then attained the zenith of her material possessions and power. Less than twenty years later the British Empire began breaking up when the United States of America became a Republic.

St. John's Island became a colony of England in 1763 and was politically annexed to Nova Scotia; in 1769 it was made a separate colony, but before that event, in the year 1764, Surveyor General Samuel Holland, commissioned by the British Government, began a survey to include all of British North America; St. John's Island was chosen for the beginning of this task because of its small size and because, in all probability, it was intended by the British Government to divide it up among its friends; the Surveyor divided the Island into three counties about equal in size; Kings in the east, Queens in the centre, and Prince county in the west, and the entire Island into 67 parcels of land each containing about 20,000 acres. The British Government of the day let it be known that these "lots" of land would be given to those of its friends having claims on the Government. So many "friends" came forward with "claims" that the Colonial Office decided each friend would have a chance to draw by lot one of those townships. The drawing took place in London on July 8, 1767, when the "lots" were disposed of and absentee landlordism was from that day established by England as one of the evil influences in the Island's history. It took over one hundred years before those landlords and their successors were compelled to give up for a price what they had acquired for almost nothing.

Walter Patterson, of Irish ancestry, was the first Governor of St. John's Island under the British Regime. His oath of office, similar to those administered to other colonial governors of British North America at that time, included a declaration against Transubstantiation; a declaration against any foreign prelate (the Pope) having any ecclesiastical or spiritual jurisdiction in his colony. His instructions from the British Colonial Office included the following: "you are to permit a liberty of conscience to all persons except Papists". The penal laws against Catholics were in force in the British Isles – they could not vote or hold any public office, or enter any of the learned professions; Catholics were prevented from obtaining property by deed or inheritance; Catholic Bishops and priests were excluded from the realm; Mass

was not to be said or heard; all Catholic education was banned. In 1766 Britain decided:

“That Roman Catholics residing in countries ceded to His Majesty in America, by the Treaty of Paris are not subject in those colonies to the Incapacities, Disabilities and Penalties to which Roman Catholics in this Kingdom are subject by the laws thereof”.

This meant, only, that Catholics in North American Colonies were not to be punished by fines and imprisonment for being Catholics. Toleration but not recognition was permitted. Expediency required further concessions to Catholics in Quebec. By the Quebec Act of 1774, personal and political freedom of Catholics in Quebec was allowed. Emancipation of Catholics in Quebec preceded by fifty-five years emancipation in the British Isles. It took place in Quebec nine years before the repeal of the Nova Scotian Act of 1758 banishing Catholic priests and forbidding Catholics acquiring land; it anticipated by four years the first slight amelioration of the legal outlawing of Catholics in the British Isles in 1778. But if concessions were permitted to Catholics in Quebec before they were allowed in Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island, there was no concession in Quebec, Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island to the Catholic Church as an institution. The late lamented Dr. James F. Kenney, the Founder of the Canadian Catholic Historical Association and the Secretary of the English section up to his death in June 1946, in his article on “Relations between Church and State in Canada” in the *Catholic Historical Review* for January 1933 writes:

“It (the Catholic Church in Canada) was granted a bare legal toleration with restrictions on its liberty of action and a state control over its personnel and administration which might, at any time, if enforced and obeyed, turn it into a schismatical body.”

In the year 1780 Patterson had the Island House of Assembly (in which no Catholic had a seat) pass an act, changing the name St. John's Island to New Ireland. Needless to say he was sharply reprimanded by the Home Government for such an indiscretion and the Act was disallowed. However in the year 1799 the Island's name was changed from St. John's to Prince Edward Island, in honor of the fourth of the sons of George III; this man, also known as the Duke of Kent, never even visited the Island. He was Commander in Chief of the British Forces in British North America before being summoned back to England in middle age, compelled to give up his mistress, Madame St. Laurent, and to find a wife from a German principality in order to ensure, if possible, the Hanoverian and Protestant succession to the throne in England. His royal brothers who succeeded each other on the English throne, George IV and William IV, had no legitimate but many illegitimate offspring. Prince Edward, according to Lytton Strachey, was more successful than others of his royal brothers; he married a German Princess and their infant daughter, by a narrow margin of time, was born in England instead of in Germany, in the year 1819. In 1837 she became Queen Victoria

of England and the British Dominions beyond the seas, and thus the Hanoverian and Protestant succession to the throne was preserved.

Loyalty to the Stewart or Stuart Dynasty and the Catholic religion were important factors influencing the migration of large numbers of Scotch Catholics to Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, the Glengarry section of Ontario as well as parts of the United States. James II of England and VII of Scotland was the last Catholic king of England (1685-1688); his grandson Prince Charles Edward, called by English historians the "Young Pretender", was the last of the Stuarts to attempt, by force of arms, to regain the English throne of his ancestors. At the Battle of Culloden Moor, in Scotland, in the year 1746, the cause of Prince Charles Edward, supported by many of the Catholic Highland clans as well as by some clans no longer Catholic, was defeated by English and German troops under the command of the Duke of Cumberland, the second son of the Hanoverian, King George II of England. Following this revolt the property of the Highland clans who had been "out" in 1745 and 1746 with "Bonnie Prince Charlie" was devastated by hordes of pillaging troops under Cumberland; stories of "frightfulness" are not unknown to the generation which has seen two World Wars against Germany in the years between 1914 and 1945. Cumberland, in his frightfulness against the Catholics of Scotland, following Culloden, earned for himself the title of "the Butcher"; to the Scotch Catholic Highlanders and their descendants the name of Cumberland "the Butcher" has the same effect of angry loathing which the name of Cromwell has had upon generations of Irish Catholics.

After Culloden, the penal laws against Catholics in the British Isles were imposed with great severity. Many of the Scotch Catholic Highlanders decided to leave their native land, but in their impoverished state they were unable to get away. A benefactor and deliverer came to the assistance of some of them. Captain John MacDonald upon whose father's estates in Glenfinnan the banner of Prince Charles had been unfolded in 1745, mortgaged his estates of Glenaladale and Glenfinnan, and along with money raised by Bishop Hay of Scotland and Bishop Challoner of England, he bought tracts of land on St. John's Island. In the following year, 1772, after a voyage of almost two months on the *Alexander* two hundred and ten Scotch Catholics were brought to the Island. They sailed up the East River (Hillsborough) as far as the vessel could take them and landed close to the site of a former Catholic Church which fourteen years earlier had been the gathering place of the Acadian French, before they had been deported by the British and their church burned to the ground. The French had named this parish, Fort St. Louis; the Scotch emigrants renamed it Scotchfort. One of Captain John MacDonald's estates, bought the year before, bordered the shore of Tracadie Bay; it was not far away from the place of landing and was called Glenaladale; another was on the opposite shore of the East River and was named Glenfinnan. Nearly one hundred of the 210 people who landed in 1772 were MacDonalds. Many of the descendants of those MacDonalds, MacKinnons, MacLeans, MacRaes,

MaePhees, MacKenzies, MacDougalls, MacEacherns, Gillises, Beatons, Campbells, MacIntoshes and other Scotch Catholic family names who came over in 1772 and in later migrations, constitute much of the Scotch Catholic population of Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia at the present time.

With the migration of 1772 came Father James MacDonald, a cousin of Captain John the leader, the first non-French priest to labour on Prince Edward Island. He had been educated in Rome, ordained at the Scots College in 1765; he spoke English, French, Gaelic, Italian. He wrote in Latin to the then Bishop of Quebec, the Right Reverend J. O. Briand, asking for faculties and a small altar stone, as the one he had was too large to carry about with him. He attached himself more to the Acadian French in their isolated parish of Malbecque, which had escaped destruction by the English in 1758. The Scotch emigrants shortly after their landing at Scotchfort erected a church built of logs which was dedicated to St. John. The site is still pointed out on the river side below the railway track but the building has long since disappeared. Father James MacDonald labored so ardently among the French and Scotch settlers of Prince Edward Island that his health broke down and he died in 1785 when he was only 49 years old. His body was buried in the old French cemetery at Scotchfort. With the Scotch Highlanders in 1772 came a medical doctor, Dr. Roderick MacDonald, another relative of Captain John. Among the many names used to designate one MacDonald from another at the present time on Prince Edward Island, the name Doctor as applied to a MacDonald indicates that he or she is descended from Dr. Roderick MacDonald who was probably the first fully qualified Medical Doctor to practise his profession on Prince Edward Island.

Among the emigrants, who came to St. John's Island in 1772, were Hugh MacEachern and his wife and their six children; being in fairly comfortable circumstances the family, bought land on the east side of Savage Harbour, on the North Shore of the Island, about six miles north of St. Andrews. Two other children remained in Scotland, Margaret the eldest, who had married shortly before her parents migrated, and Angus Bernard, youngest of the family who was born at Moidart, Inverness, Scotland on February 8th, 1759, thirteen years after the Battle of Culloden and seven months before the Battle of the Plains of Abraham which changed the ownership of Canada from France to England.

Angus Bernard was fourteen years old when his parents set sail for the New World; he was put under the care of Bishop Hugh MacDonald, Vicar Apostolic of the Highland District. It was this Bishop MacDonald who encouraged Angus Bernard to study for the priesthood, and to carry out that design was the reason his parents had in leaving the adolescent boy in Scotland. The Bishop sent his young charge to the Catholic preparatory seminary of Samalaman in Moidart, (later transferred to Lismore) in the autumn of the year which saw the boy's parents depart for St. John's Island. As the writer of this paper was unable to obtain information about the

Seminary of Samalaman, he has briefly sketched the contemporary school of Scalan,² in order to illustrate the efforts made by Catholics to preserve the Faith in Scotland, during the long years of persecution against the Church, in that country.

The college or seminary of Scalan has had an interesting history; it was one of those secret schools in Scotland in which young men, under priest teachers, in constant fear of the penal laws against Catholics, which strictly forbade under severe penalties such places to exist, were trained. When the young men who were selected for the College obtained their classical training, they were sent to France or Spain or Italy to study for the priesthood. When ordained they returned to the Scottish missions. The Seminary was opened in the year 1712 at Scalar, Glenlivet, Banffshire, a retired and lonely district; it was on the estate of the Catholic Duke of Gordon "the Cock of the North" and chief of the powerful clan of his name. Reverend William Duthie, a convert to the Catholic Church, ordained at the Scots College, Paris, in 1742 was the Rector of Scalan at the time of the Battle of Culloden and daily expecting a visit from "Cumberland the Butcher" and his "fire and sword" exterminating party, he dismissed the students, hid the vestments, chapel furniture, books and sacred vessels and awaited the catastrophe. On May 10th, 1746 the despoilers arrived, and Father Duthie from a distant hiding place viewed the destruction of his humble academy; by the autumn of 1747 Scalan had been rebuilt on a larger scale, though it was still merely a fair-sized farmhouse. For better disguise the students did their daily share of farm work; further trouble was expected from Cumberland's hordes who kept harassing the countries of the "Popish clans"; a friendly sergeant and his wife connected with the barracks where the pillaging troops lodged, used to warn Father Duthie whenever a military visit might be expected at Scalan, and when the military arrived all they saw was a rather poor farm being worked by some lads and elderly men and thus the school escaped destruction. Scalan continued its valuable work of education and preparing many priests for the Scottish Missions down to the year 1799 when it was removed to more spacious quarters at Aquhorties in Aberdeenshire, and in 1829 it was transferred to the site of the present Blairs College near Aberdeen.

Angus Bernard MacEachern spent five years at Samalaman from 1772 to 1777, then he was sent to the Royal Scots College formerly the college of St. Ambrose in Valladolid, Spain.

In the year 1663 the Bishops of Scotland, with money given by a fellow Scot, Colonel Semple, built in Madrid a Seminary for the training of priests for the Scottish Missions; they placed the seminary in charge of the Jesuits. When the Jesuit Order was suppressed the College was taken over by the

² The Priest Heroes of "The 45" by Rev. B. W. Kelly. A pamphlet issued by the Catholic Truth Society of London and Glasgow.

Spanish Government. The Scottish Bishops claimed, with every right, that the College was only administered by the Jesuits; the Spanish authorities seeing the justice of the claim but having already appropriated the building for civic purposes gave the Bishops the College of St. Ambrose, founded by the Jesuits at Valladolid. To this famous college in which Suarez and Rodriguez had taught, young MacEachern came as a seminarian in 1777.

He was never regarded as a brilliant student but, hard working, possessing a fund of common sense, a fervent faith, a love of religion and a genial nature, he became a favourite with his fellow students. He had considerable skill in manual labour acquired at the School at Salamanca and was frequently engaged in his leisure from classwork in practical useful work at the college; with the aid of other students he built a large boat. In the spring of 1788 the river upon which the City of Valladolid is built, overflowed its banks, and the boat built by MacEachern and manned by Scotch students saved the lives of many of the people in the inundated area; for which services a pecuniary token was paid by the State and is said to have been continued up to the termination of the Monarchy in Spain.

On August 20th, 1787, after ten years of Seminary Work, Angus Bernard MacEachern was raised to the priesthood by Bishop Moreno at Valladolid, and returned home to Scotland where he was assigned to duty in the Western Highlands.

No doubt the letters from his parents and other kinsfolk in far away St. John's Island must have influenced him, as did the knowledge, that since the death of Father James MacDonald in 1785, the entire Island was without a priest; in any event according to Father John C. MacMillan the author of *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island*:

“conditions in the Scottish Highlands, for Catholics, were far from satisfactory. Landlordism and petty religious persecution never ceased to exercise their baneful influence... the poorer classes, unable to defray the expenses of an ocean voyage, could only nurse their chronic discontent in silence and tears; those who were better provided with means were quietly preparing for the journey. Only one circumstance deterred them; the want of a priest and the consequent privation of the Sacraments in the land of their adoption.”

Father MacEachern, appealed to by his parents across the ocean, and by his own people in Scotland, sought his Bishop and after much pleading, permission to leave the Scotch Missions for St. John's Island was obtained. The letter which he carried with him from his Bishop addressed to the Bishop of Quebec is dated July 6th, 1790; it states the reluctance with which Bishop Alex McDonald consented to part with such a:

“deserving young clergyman full of zeal, piety and for abilities natural and acquired, equal to the due discharge of his respective functions... In the Island of St. John's there are upwards of six hundred of the Roman persuasion, half

French, halfemigrants who went to these parts a long time ago About seven years past they had the misfortune to be deprived of the truly worthy churchman, who had accompanied the latter from Scotland; and have since been without the assistance of a pastor and have never ceased to make application and importune me for a clergyman. To the above entreaties were lately added the petitions and I may say the supplications of a very numerous emigration from these countries to said Island, so that I find myself unable to resist any longer, notwithstanding my difficulties at home for want of laborers, I am willing to believe that Your Lordship has been all along in the dark with regard to the distressed situation of the worthy Catholics in St John's Island, otherwise you would have fallen upon some effectual plan, which in time coming must necessarily be the case."

When Father MacEachern arrived on St. John's Island in the month of August 1790 he was thirty years of age. A considerable number of Scotch families came over with him; their small holdings of land as tenants having been taken away from them by their landlords to make sheep runs or to enlarge private estates. The tenants were obliged to move, and some came with Father MacEachern to St. John's Island.

The Most Reverend Cornelius O'Brien, former Archbishop of Halifax, who was born and educated on Prince Edward Island, in his Memoirs of Rt. Rev. Edmund Burke, published in 1894, quotes a portion of a letter dated Oct. 5th, 1790 written by Father Jones, Vicar Apostolic of Nova Scotia to the Bishop of Quebec, that 250 Scotch Catholics had recently arrived on the Island along with Father MacEachern. No mention is made in Father John C. MacMillan's book about those who came to the Island with Father MacEachern. He had followed the arduous training required for a missionary priest; now he was united with his own people; in his native Gaelic he could speak and preach to them; to the Acadian French of the Island who had escaped deportation he could speak (but with no great ease) in their own language, to the Bishop of Quebec he could write in Latin.

About fifteen hundred Catholic people were living on the Island when he began his work in 1790. These were scattered over the length and breadth of the two thousand square miles of the Island. Father MacEachern had written to the Bishop of Quebec, on arriving, presenting the credentials accorded him by Bishop MacDonald in Scotland. Bishop Hubert of Quebec referred the credentials to Father Jones of Halifax, an Irish priest, who three years before had been appointed by the Bishop, Superior of the English Missions in the Lower Provinces. Father Jones wrote the Bishop of Quebec that his correspondence with Father MacEachern had convinced him that the recently arrived young Levite was:

"a very worthy priest well acquainted with the customs, morals and language of his countrymen. He enjoys excellent health and can do a great deal for the good of our holy religion. I have asked him to visit the poor Scotch of Pictou, Merigomiche and Miramichi next summer instead of going to Quebec. There

are Calvinist ministers in those places, who speak to the people in Erse; as none of our missionaries speak that language the Scotch Catholics derive but little benefit from their visits. As Father MacEachern is full of zeal, and can preach in that tongue, we can hope a great measure of success from his labors in those missions.”

Thus in the first few months of his arrival Father MacEachern was commissioned to visit not only his own territory consisting of the whole of St. John’s Island but the mainland as well. For many years to come he would be back and forward to New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island while endeavouring to minister single handed to the people he had come from Scotland to serve. In addition he had been commissioned by the Bishop of Quebec to look after the spiritual needs of the Acadian French.

Having been accorded faculties from Father Jones of Halifax, Father MacEachern assembled his people for the first time in the log church which the Scotch emigrants had built at Scotchfort. He offered the sacrifice of the Mass, preached to his people in Gaelic, the only language known to the great majority of them; afterwards “ he shouldered his missionary pack and set out to visit small scattered settlements”.

Some of the difficulties he experienced during his early years in the Colony may be learned from a letter he wrote to the Bishop of Quebec on May 1st, 1793.

“ There is only one large missal in folio of a very old date in this Island, and as the place is so poor, that I cannot keep a servant and horse, I find it very burdensome to carry missal, vestments, altar stone and whatever other little necessities I want from one settlement to another, especially as I must go from Station to Station every other Sunday.”

In winter time, Father MacEachern carried skates and snowshoes in addition to the equipment he mentioned in his letter to the Bishop, and guided by his compass he made his way through the forests with so much expertness that few could keep up with him; when he reached a stream that had been frozen he would exchange snowshoes for skates and keep on his way to his destination many miles away. Some years later during seasons of the years which permitted, he rode on horseback, along the trails through the forests; later still when rude roads were constructed in parts of the Island, his yellow gig, a two wheeled vehicle, became well known throughout his extensive missions, and in the winter months his snow shoes and skates were replaced by a curious contrivance which by his own skill in manual work he constructed for the difficult travelling he was obliged to undertake in attending the increasing number of small settlements throughout the Colony. This curious combination of sleigh and boat has been preserved in St. Joseph’s Convent, Charlottetown. It is a unique reminder of the missionary zeal of Bishop MacEachern remaining to the present day, to testify how difficult had

been his labors in laying the foundations of the Church in Prince Edward Island.

It will be recalled that in his seminary days in Valladolid, Spain, Father MacEachern had built a boat which he had likely used on the river flowing past that historic old city. The year after he had left the Seminary as a priest, the boat he built, manned by Scotch Students, had saved the lives of a number of people when the river inundated the riverside houses of the inhabitants. Now in far distant St. John's Island, in British North America, facing the need of making sick calls and offering the Sacrifice of the Mass in almost inaccessible settlements, in the winter and early spring seasons of the year, with no organized means of transport, Father MacEachern constructed a combination of boat and sleigh; its lower part was made of rungs and cross-bars like the ordinary sleigh still well enough known on the Island. Upon this was built a boat about eight feet in length fastened by iron stays to the framework beneath. In the boat he placed whatever he required for personal use and for saying Mass. A horse was harnessed to this hybrid contrivance and he was thus equipped to travel over the snow covered land or on the ice along the shores of the many small rivers and bays of his Large territory. Should his horse break through the ice, the boat would float and thus preserve its precious contents. It is presumed that on occasion the horse would be unharnessed and the boat on its runners launched into short stretches of open water to be hauled up on the ice on the further side.

As in all pioneer missionary countries these journeys from one remote place to another were, and are still known as "holding a station"; with Father MacEachern to hold a station was a many sided event; as it was known in advance the approximate day of his arrival, the people for many miles about would be there to meet him. From the time of his arrival to his departure he was fully taken up with a variety of tasks: the blessing of the few articles of devotion possessed by the people, hearing confessions, solemnizing marriages, baptizing, offering up the Holy Sacrifice were his own priestly functions. He, however, had to be much more than the missionary priest; he was physician and attended to the sick; he had to take on the qualities of a lawyer, of a judge, of a peacemaker; disputes required settlement and after hearing both sides his decision after consideration would be given and was rarely questioned; reconciliations were made between families and individuals; he made it a condition that unless a friendly settlement was made the individuals concerned could not receive Holy Communion.

Father MacMillan's biographical account of Bishop MacEachern is embellished by the story of a woman in Cape Breton, who complained on the occasion of holding a station on that Island, that her husband was a constant fault-finder and a disturber of the peace of the small community in which they lived. Matters had become so bad that she had decided she could bear her troubles no longer and accordingly she was about to leave her man. Father MacEachern after listening patiently to her story (the conversation was in

Gaelic) advised her to keep always at hand a bottle filled with salt and water from which she was to take frequent mouthfuls as soon as her husband began to scold and as long as the domestic storm continued, she was to keep the salt and water in her mouth. In addition to the rich fund of common sense possessed by this missionary priest he had, as Father MacMillan relates, a ready wit, a fund of good humour and an almost intuitive ability in the discernment of character.

From the beginning of his work in the Colony, Father MacEachern, impressed with the need of bringing spiritual help to the scattered groups of Gaelic-speaking, English-speaking and French-speaking Catholics, not only on the Island but on the mainland as well, endeavoured to bring to the attention of his superiors at Quebec a sense of responsibility in this important matter. His former Episcopal superior in Scotland, as we have seen from the letter he gave Father MacEachern for delivery to the Bishop of Quebec, was fully aware of the difficulties which the young priest would encounter in attempting to cover the large territory assigned to him.

In a letter to the Bishop of Quebec dated August 29, 1791 Father MacEachern in part writes:

“as the Catholic emigrants here are all Highlanders, and not altogether acquainted with any language but the Gaelic, I was advised by Bishop MacDonald to go to Quebec to see if anything could be done in order to educate some students in the Seminary of Quebec acquainted with the Gaelic”.

He then alludes to the great difficulties the poor missions in Scotland have in educating priests in France, Italy and Spain and also to the poverty of Catholics on St. John's Island preventing them from supporting a clergyman and in addition a student in the Seminary. A few years later he again writes to the Bishop of Quebec:

“I foresee that religion will soon decay here, if something is not done within the Diocese to procure a succession and continuation of pastors for these wilds. I do not see any other resource but from the Seminaries of Canada.”

In spite of these appeals, and despite the increasing work devolving upon Father MacEachern, it was not until twenty years had elapsed that the first Islander entered the Quebec Seminary and that the first Canadian priest came to share the labours of his extensive mission. Father MacEachern kept pointing out, to those in authority, the pressing need of making provision for the future. In addition to his difficulties in securing priests, he had to contend with the apathy and poor financial circumstances of the Scotch and French people among whom he laboured. Accordingly, when the Bishop of Quebec decided (it is presumed at Father MacEachern's suggestion) to assess every communicant a few shillings per year for the support of their only priest, many demurred although he had served for little or no remuneration for nearly ten years. Father MacEachern in season and out of season continued to exhort

his people; he told them that, unless they would educate priests for themselves, a time would come when they would have none amongst them. Scotland could not help them; Quebec had been indifferent to all his pleas for years so their only hope was with themselves.

A meeting was convened at St. Andrews; it was decided in the year 1794 to buy a farm which if properly managed would yield a yearly revenue to the missionary. When the farm was paid for, by assessing each family in each mission a fixed sum each year, it was hoped to build a church and a parochial house on the farm, and then a school for the education of the youth of the missions. Perhaps from this school a few of the young men would decide to study for the priesthood. This was the beginning of the first Cathedral of the Diocese of Charlottetown; the School was the first Diocesan College.

An interesting view of the Life of a missionary is contained in a letter Father MacEachern wrote to a Scotch Bishop who had been his classmate at Valladolid. The letter was a plea to send a priest to share his burden:

“when we go by the woods which is generally the case, we go from ten to forty miles without meeting a settlement, sometimes guided by a blaze³ and often on snowshoes. It is not the number of people we have to serve that distresses us, but the scattered way in which they are forced to settle. You will more readily conceive than I can describe, how difficult a task it is for any one single handed to pay even an annual visit to so many different settlements; and when the visitation of the sick is in question, no human being can answer the different calls, more especially in winter time, when no human can face a north-west wind; I have gone eighty and often ninety miles to see sick people, and while we are running to one, another dies in our rear, calling for spiritual assistance and none perhaps within one hundred and fifty miles of him. Our people die without the sacraments and we cannot help it. If a clergyman can hear the confessions of his people once a year in even a cursory way, he does a great deal; and as for instruction, it is out of the question, let his intention be ever so good or his abilities ever so -great; our case is really deplorable.”

He cites the example of what the Irish Bishops did for Newfoundland in sending out five or six able missionaries, who brought that once abandoned country to a regular, sober, loyal congregation; now they have a Bishop and are respected by the officers of the Government; the Irish Bishops sent another missionary to Halifax, he informs the Scotch Bishop, upon whom the Government settled a pension of one hundred pounds; “why” he asks, “why could not the Scotch mission cast an anchor to windward as well as the Irish?”

Through Father MacEachern’s insistence with his Quebec superiors, the Right Reverend Joseph Octave Plessis, co-adjutor to Bishop Denault, after the

³ A blaze is a mark made on a tree by chipping off a portion of bark.

consent of the Governor of Prince Edward Island had been obtained, succeeded in getting the services of two French refugee priests, who had fled to England from the horrors of the French Revolution. Father Joseph de Colonne was the brother of a highly placed official in the regime of the ill-fated Louis XVI of France, whose influence obtained, from the English Government, a grant of land on St. John's Island for his brother the priest. This tract of land, later known as the Warren Farm, at the entrance to Charlottetown Harbour was granted Father Colonne who wrote from London to the Bishop of Quebec on February 5th, 1799, in substance:

“ that he proposed coming to his property on St. John's Island with about a dozen emigrant French priests and about thirty Catholic laborers; he asked permission to build a chapel on his property to say Mass and confess all those who may compose my little colony”...“ it is our intention that we live together in community reciting the Divine Office and performing our other spiritual exercises in common; singing High Mass and Vespers on Sundays and Holy days and giving instructions to those who may assist thereat.”

This plan of Father Colonne for the benefit of himself and his colony would be of little use to the much over-worked Father MacEachern; the plan was not carried out in its entirety.

Father Colonne and a companion priest, Father Pichard, came to the Island; on May 28th, 1800 he wrote to the Bishop of Quebec in part, as follows:

“ the Catholics are scattered throughout the entire Island, a circumstance which renders the work of the ministry exceedingly difficult. They are divided into three classes; the French or Acadian, the Irish and the Scotch. We can be most useful to the French but they have the less need of our services. They live in three settlements, Malpecque in the Northwest, Rustico on the North and a third in the east called Fortune Bay (Rollo Bay). I have placed them in charge of Father Pichard.

“ The majority of the Scotch speak only the Celtique language, I cannot understand them and am therefore of no service to them. Father MacEachern has charge of them; they are a good people holding their religion in great veneration. The town (the future Charlottetown) has fallen to my care because I speak English; it is made up principally of Irish and a few Scotch, the greater number, soldiers and all drunkards to an incredible excess as well as supremely ignorant,... they are attached to their faith; they would suffer death rather than abandon it, but they don't observe even one of the Commandments. It would be easier, if I may so express myself, to make of them martyrs than Christians.”

Father John C. MacMillan after quoting the long letter from Father Colonne to the Bishop of Quebec, of which the above has been extracted comments:

“ that it was little wonder that the Catholics in Charlottetown, mostly Irish, were living as they were at that time because of the spiritual abandonment they had been subjected to because of the absence of a priest.”

Father MacEachern had, in letter after letter to the Bishop of Quebec, tried to impress the authorities there of what would happen if he did not have priests sent to him; the wonder is, as Father MacMillan states, that even a vestige of the true faith could have survived; and yet survive it did for even Father Colonne admitted “ that it is easier to make of them martyrs than Christians.”

With Father Colonne in charge at Charlottetown, saying Mass in his own house, and with very little sympathy toward his parishioners; Father Picard in charge of three Acadian parishes, Father MacEachern was still carrying by far the greatest burden; from Malbecque in the north to East Point, a distance of over one hundred miles; on the mainland from Pictou, Nova Scotia to Judique on Cape Breton Island, he was constantly on the go, either walking or on horseback, or in his two wheeled gig or in winter by snowshoes and skates or by his combination sleigh and boat. Father Colonne wanted to be transferred by the Bishop of Quebec to another portion of the vast Maritime territory more congenial to his feelings. The Bishop tried to comfort him by stating that when he made a pastoral visit in the summer to the Maritimes, as he intended to do, he would talk with him in person. The Right Reverend P. Denault, Bishop of Quebec from 1797 to 1806, accompanied by his secretary, Father Lartigue, afterwards the first Bishop of Montreal, came to Prince Edward Island on August 15th, 1803 by way of Boston and from there to Nova Scotia and then to Charlottetown, where he was welcomed by Father Colonne. He was the first Bishop of the Catholic Church to visit Prince Edward Island.

Father Colonne had been in charge of the Charlottetown mission four years, when the Bishop arrived on the Island; there were 348 Catholics but no church, no parochial house; at Scotchfort and Tracadie where the Bishop went after visiting Charlottetown, he found the old log church of St. John at Scotchfort so dilapidated he refused to say Mass in it. In a pastoral, he chose a site for a new church at St. Andrews; he ordered:

“ The Catholics of St. Andrews, Newfrage, Tracadie, Three Rivers, Fortune and East Point to unite and build at St. Andrews, a chapel sixty feet long by thirty-six feet wide, boarded within and without, with a Sacristy eighteen feet by twenty and to fence in a cemetery a half acre in size; they were to provide the chapel with vestments, sacred vessels and linen.”

Among other directions he recommended that the people pay the missionary an annual sum of five shillings each, otherwise he would be placed elsewhere if not furnished with a fair living.

The Bishop's letter written in French was ordered to be translated into Gaelic and read by Father MacEachern to the people. This pastoral was dated August 24th, 1803 at Tracadie, St. John's Island; most likely it was written

at the residence of Captain John MacDonald. There were 1622 Catholics in the five missions at that time. The Bishop then visited the Acadian Missions; at Rustico he transferred Father Pichard to New Brunswick; there were 285 French Catholics at Rustico and at Malpecque 235; the Scotch numbered 353; there were eighteen English families and thirteen Indians. Father Colonne was named parish priest of Rustico; he was also appointed Vicar General of the Bishop of Quebec and pastor as well of the Acadian missions.

One year later, in 1804, Father Colonne on the eve of settling in Quebec, returned to France; once more Father MacEachern was the only priest in Prince Edward Island, the Catholic population of which was yearly increasing by Irish and Scotch emigration.

Father MacMillan thinks that Bishop Denault appointed Father Colonne as his Vicar General on the Island, because he thought Father MacEachern would be too indulgent in forcing his people to carry out the Bishop's orders about Church construction. It is of interest to learn Father Colonne's opinion of his confere Father MacEachern; it is contained in a letter sent to Bishop Denault before the priest departed for France:

“ I reproach Father MacEachern that he is not vigorous enough in enforcing the Bishop's orders, of course he has to do with a people very disobedient on this point. The Scotch were not accustomed to contribute towards the Church in the old Country and they think to get along here in the same deplorable way. Many did not even want to pay Father MacEachern five shillings per communicant although the poor man is overburdened with work. And when I tried to force them I had more trouble with the good priest himself than I had with the people!” Father MacEachern, as remarked by Father McMillan his biographer, “ laboured not for money but for the glory of God, his whole career is a shining example of disinterestedness in this respect.”

With the death of Bishop Denault at Longueuil, near Montreal, in the year 1806 and the occupancy of the episcopal See of Quebec by Bishop Plessis, a new era began for the Church in Canada. He was the first Bishop of Quebec since the Conquest to be allowed to publicly bear the title of Bishop. His predecessors, from Briand in the year 1766, were called by the British Government the “ Superintendent of the Romish Church in Canada”. Just as Bishop Briand through his friendship with Guy Carleton, the second Governor General of Canada, was able to influence French Canada from joining the New England States in their revolt against England in 1776, so Plessis in the war of 1812.¹⁴ showed his loyalty to the British and Canadian cause and became *persona grata* with the rulers of Canada; as did the even more popular and future Bishop MacDonell of Upper Canada, before, during and after the same conflict.

Father MacEachern and Bishop Plessis had known each other well and favourably by correspondence, throughout the coadjutorship of Bishop

Plessis; now that he was Bishop he invited Father MacEachern who had then been a missionary for sixteen years to visit him at Quebec. The poverty of his mission, having no assistants, and the difficulties of transportation, prevented acceptance of his Bishop's invitation.

Bishop Plessis having been in charge of the immense Diocese of Quebec from the year 1806, decided, like his predecessor, to visit the long eastern fringe of it, namely the Maritime Provinces; in the month of May of the year 1812 in a small sailing vessel, after visiting missions in New Brunswick, he landed with Father Beaubien and Father Maguire at Bedeque, Prince Edward Island on July 1st, 1812. The Bishop kept a diary of his Maritime visit; his impressions of Father MacEachern were recorded during the three weeks that the priest acted as the Bishop's guide among the missions of Prince Edward Island.

“ There is not a bay, a harbour, a cove, a point of land, a reef or a rock that he cannot point out, not a route by land with which he is not familiar, not a family, Catholic or Protestant, French or Scotch whose good and bad qualities have escaped his notice, not a property that he cannot value off hand.”

The Bishop tells that, during the short time that Fathers Colonne and Pichard were in the Colony, Father MacEachern extended his labours further afield (on the mainland) of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island.

“ The Scotch and Acadians on Prince Edward Island praise his watchful care and devotedness. His conversation is that of a virtuous priest. He enjoys the esteem and respect of all classes, for while he is ever scrupulously exact in performing the duties of his sacred calling, he is no less mindful in observing the canons of politeness and good breeding.”

The Bishop was painfully impressed with the poverty of the churches. He was shocked at the almost utter destitution that prevailed in this part of his jurisdiction.

“ In Canada”, the Bishop writes, “ we have little idea of the poverty of the Acadian chapels of Prince Edward Island and no idea whatever of the utter destitution of the Scottish churches; only a priest brought up in Scotland would ever think of saying Mass in the like. In one there are no altar breads, nor irons for making them, in another no Missal. Here you find a chalice with a cup of gilded copper, there, one entirely of tin. In most of the Churches there are neither cures, nor albs, nor chalices, nor altar cloths, nor credence tables nor surplices, nor ciboriums, nor holy water font, nor baptismal water. In the whole of Prince Edward Island neither censer or ostensorium has been seen within the memory of man. A Scotch priest will preach, hear confessions and administer all the sacraments, dressed in citizen's clothing, with an old ribbon that serves as a stole suspended from his neck. In bringing Holy Communion to the sick he puts this ragged stole in one pocket and the pyx containing the Sacred Host in another, and starts on his way conversing with

this one, shaking hands with another and even spending the nights in some house near his route, whose inmates are not aware that he is the bearer of a priceless treasure. If the sick person is very far distant, he goes provided with his portable altar, and says Mass near the bed of the patient, who is thus enabled to receive Holy Communion. If any children are to be baptized, he administers the sacraments, in the house with water specially blessed for the purpose. This is one of the effects of religious persecution in Scotland. There, priests were obliged to administer the Sacraments in secret and fearing they might be betrayed and condemned to death, they suppressed all the exterior forms of worship that were not strictly essential... singing is as rare in their churches as ceremonies and vestments, *and yet wonderful to relate the fervour of their faith surpasses all imagination.*”

Bishop Plessis, born and educated in Quebec, where penal laws against Catholics never existed, inheriting the traditions of an episcopacy and priesthood of France, had encountered few missionary priests in his own diocese, who had been trained in seminaries to endure hardships, poverty and great sacrifices, even death following imprisonment, in bringing the Sacraments oftentimes in secrecy and the priest sometimes disguised, to the wavering, the sick and dying Catholics of Scotland, Ireland and England; it may have been his first meeting with groups of people who had migrated from lands whose penal laws against their religion included not only the terrors of the law against the Catholic priesthood but the harassing of the people and the confiscation of their possessions; no wonder he wrote “the fervour of their faith surpasses all imagination.”

In another portion of the Bishop’s diary he again alludes to the fervour of the Scotch Catholics:

“they are as attached to their priest and as demonstrative in their piety as the Irish. At Mass you hear them sighing and at the Elevation they burst forth into sobs. They keep joining and separating their hands and striking their breasts so that their arms are in continual movement. Many remain prostrate with face to the floor all through the Sacrifice of the Mass. At Communion men and women drag themselves on their knees to the altar rail, and in their ardour would reach the foot of the altar, if no one would prevent them”

Charlottetown had no Catholic Church for the Bishop to inspect; he however directed that the Church which was soon to be started should be called St. Dunstan of Canterbury. On July 17, 1812, the feast of St. Alexis, the Bishop arrived at Fortune Bay (Rollo Bay) and decreed that the little church should bear the name of a saint who had been a beggar and an outcast; a great number of people had assembled from Newfane, Souris, East Point, Three Rivers (Georgetown, Sturgeon, Cardigan). Every house in the settlement was crowded, many passed the night in the church, others slept in the open, two small barns served as confessionals for Father MacEachern and Father MacDonald (who had come over with the Bishop from Nova Scotia). Confirmation was administered to ninety-six persons. The Bishop left the

Island, by sailing schooner from Rollo Bay, to resume his visitation on Cape Breton Island, accompanied by Father MacEachern; Father Beaubien remained to look after the Acadian Missions.

One month previous to the Maritime visit of Bishop Plessis the war of 1812-14 had broken out and the Bishop postponed an intended longer visit to Nova Scotia to hasten back to Quebec. Bishop Plessis, before leaving, gave Father MacEachern a pastoral letter written in the French language and dated Pictou, Nova Scotia August 12, 1812. He told the missionary priest to translate it into Gaelic and have it read to the people of his different missions. An important item in the pastoral was his direction to Father MacEachern to take up collections from the people for the education of two boys, whom Father MacEachern was to select between the ages of twelve and fifteen years to be sent to Quebec to begin their studies "in one of four colleges".

Up to the visit of the Bishop, Father MacEachern had been accustomed during the twenty-two years of his work on the Island to go about in clothes of dark homespun cloth, which had been woven and dyed and made by relatives. The Bishop commanded him to go about in clerical attire; by which, he meant no doubt, to wear a cassock. Father MacEachern went about in ordinary lay attire for the same reason that missionary priests in Ireland, Scotland and England did in penal times, so as not to attract undue attention to themselves and their work. The Penal laws were still on the Statute books and could be invoked should the occasion, in the eyes of Protestant officials, require action. Father MacEachern, during his twenty-two years of work (up to that time) among the Catholic missions on Prince Edward Island had not been officially recognized by the Government of the time. He was tolerated and allowed to go about his way unmolested. Things would have been different had he applied for a passport or any other legal document; he avoided conflict by making as little outward display as possible. Of the three Governors of the Colony with whom, in turn, Father MacEachern came in contact during their terms of office none put any obstacle in his way. A new Governor arrived in 1813 in the person of Charles Douglas Smith who proceeded to show that the Penal Laws could be invoked; he wrote Father MacEachern under date of August 17, 1813, to the effect that all marriages solemnized by the priest without first obtaining a license from the Governor would be "notified as null and void and of no effect in law". Father MacEachern through a friendly intermediary pointed out to the Governor the important part the Catholics of the Island had played in the American War of Independence when Captain John MacDonald raised a company which fought on the British side; he furthermore informed the Governor that the Catholics, were prepared to again take part, on the British side, in the war then going on (1812-14); in addition, he let the Governor know, that, if marriages solemnized by the Catholic Clergy were null and void, then the marriages of the ancestors of the present Protestant generation must have been null and void, because they were all Catholics up to the time of the Reformation and

many of them for many years after. He reminded the Governor that at such a time with war raging not so far away, with union of all classes and creeds necessary for a common purpose, it was not good policy to cause ill will to the comparatively large numbers of Catholics on Prince Edward Island. In the course of a few years the Governor dropped his intention to introduce State action in the matter of Catholic marriages.

The two boys selected by Father MacEachern to go to Quebec with the object of studying for the priesthood, supported by money collected by him from the Island Missions were: Ronald MacDonald of Priest's Pond and Bernard Donald MacDonald from St. Andrews; they arrived at Quebec in October 1812 and were placed by Bishop Plessis in the Seminary; they were the first of a long line of students sent from Prince Edward Island, to prepare for Holy Orders in Quebec. Their studies were followed with great interest by Father MacEachern. One year later two more boys from Prince Edward Island, John and Roderick MacDonald, sons of Captain John MacDonald were on their way to Montreal to begin their studies. Bishop Plessis, fearing Montreal to be unsafe for them, in the war years, directed them to the Seminary at Nicolet; these two boys were being paid for by their own people. Roderick did not continue his studies for the priesthood. John also returned home but later continued, first in London and his ordination took place in Paris in 1825. Of the first two, Ronald, after eight years at Nicolet decided, after one year in Theology, that to be a priest was not his vocation. Donald Bernard persisted and was the first native born of Prince Edward Island to be ordained; he returned to share the labours of his patron, Father MacEachern, and succeeded him as the second Bishop of Charlottetown.

The events leading up to the elevation of Father Angus Bernard MacEachern to the Episcopacy as a suffragan of the Bishop of Quebec, and later on, the creation of the Diocese of Charlottetown, with Bishop MacEachern as its first Bishop are interwoven with historical events connected with the Dioceses of Quebec, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Kingston, Ontario and to a lesser extent with Montreal and the territory of the North West later to be identified with St. Boniface, Manitoba. The Diocese of Quebec, created in 1674 with the Venerable Laval its first Bishop, included at one time in its territory much of present day Canada as well as a portion of the eastern half of what is now the United States of America.

Shortly before Canada changed ownership from France to England, the sixth Bishop of Quebec, Ponthriand, died in 1760; after the refusal of the British Government to consider the first nominee of the ecclesiastical Chapter of Quebec to fill the vacant See after the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the Chapter nominated Vicar-General Briand for the position, as he possessed the good will of General Murray, the first British Governor-General of Canada after the Conquest. Vicar-General Briand sailed for England in 1764 but had to remain there for fourteen months before any action was taken.

Dr. James F. Kenney in a footnote to his paper "Relations between Church and State in Canada" quotes the view of a Government official that it was the great Edmund Burke's influence, in the shortlived Rockingham administration of that time, in England, which encouraged Briand to cross over to France and have himself quietly consecrated Bishop. The British Government however would not allow him to use the title: Bishop of Quebec; he was officially known as the "Superintendent of the Romish Church in Canada". He was to have no connection with Rome or France; the Government consented to his obtaining the necessary Bulls from Rome but he was no longer to maintain connection with his superiors; his relations were to be with the Civil Government.

When Bishop Briand returned to Quebec in 1776, Britain instructed General Murray in part as follows:

"you are not to admit of any ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the See of Rome or any other foreign ecclesiastical jurisdiction whatsoever in the Province under your Government; and to the end that the Church of England may be established both in principles and practice and that the said inhabitants may by degrees be induced to embrace the Protestant Religion and their children be brought up in the principles of it.

Because of the appointment of a Bishop to Quebec, after the See being vacant six years, even if he was not allowed his proper title and the honors due his position, the French Clergy and people began to feel some assurance that the British conquerors might be conciliatory about their religion. This feeling was intensified when the second Governor General, Guy Carleton, who had been born in Ireland, returned to Quebec in 1774 after an absence of four years in England, contending for what he considered the rights of the new subjects in Canada. Expediency, more than anything else, persuaded the British Government to pass, in 1774, the Quebec Act whereby Catholics in Quebec were granted the free exercise of their religion, subject to the King's supremacy; the clergy were entitled by law to receive tithes; the people and clergy were granted civil rights. Governor General Guy Carleton, Bishop Briand and the Quebec Act were responsible largely for keeping Canada on the British side during the Revolutionary War of 1775-80 when the New England States of America won their independence from Great Britain.

The rigid instructions, issued by the British Government about the control their Governor General in Canada was to enforce upon the Bishop of Quebec, were not carried out either by Murray or Carleton, so that the Bishop was in touch with Rome about matters pertaining to his office. It was this spirit of toleration of the Governors in Canada, contrary to orders from the Home Government towards the religion of the conquered, and the cooperation given by Bishop Briand and his successors in not overstepping the privileges acquired, as well as the strained relations between France and the Holy See following the French Revolution which allowed the Church in Quebec to be tolerated.

From the Conquest of Canada in 1759 up to about 1845, a period of eighty-six years, Rome could not appoint a Bishop in Canada without the approval of Britain being obtained.

Succeeding Bishops of Quebec from Hubert in 1789 were desirous of doing something to decentralize the work required in governing the immense territory of the Diocese of Quebec. With the dictatorship of Napoleon over Italy and the Papal States and France, as well as over most of Europe, the imprisonment of the Pope by the Dictator, the war of 1812-14 between the United States and Britain and Canada, it was not until about 1815, with Napoleon banished to St. Helena, that attention could again be directed towards the unsatisfactory administration of the Diocese of Quebec particularly in the Maritime Provinces of Canada and in the western portions of the Diocese now known as Ontario and Manitoba.

The first portion of the Diocese of Quebec to become independent in administration was Nova Scotia through the endeavours of a remarkable churchman, Reverend Edmund Burke, born in Ireland in 1753 and ordained to the priesthood in Paris. After a short period in his native land he came to Quebec in 1786 where he was made a professor in the Seminary; then in 1794 he was sent to Upper Canada with the title of Vicar General and Superior of the missions in a territory including what is now Niagara, Toronto, London, Detroit. Through these many changes he kept in touch by correspondence with his friend Archbishop Troy of Dublin. In the memoirs of Bishop Edmund Burke edited by the late Archbishop O'Brien of Halifax in 1894, a copy of the report dated August 15, 1797, sent by Father Burke to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, is reproduced in part. In that account Father Burke wrote that the Diocese of Quebec is so vast in extent from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Pacific, that no Bishop could properly attend to its wants; he recommended an Apostolic Missionary, speaking the English language for the Maritime Provinces; also a separate diocese from Quebec to be set up in Montreal; that the missions of Upper Canada should be withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the Quebec Diocese. Because of the troubled state of the Church in Europe at that time the Holy See was unable to take any action about these suggestions.

Father Jones the first Irish Priest in Halifax returned to Ireland in 1800. He had been Vicar General of Quebec in the Maritime Provinces and was succeeded in September 1801 by Father Burke. As Vicar General in the Maritimes, Father Burke had authority over Father MacEachern in Prince Edward Island. In July of 1815 Father Burke went on a visit to Ireland, England and Rome. While in London he forwarded to Rome a long memorial on Church affairs in British North America; subsequent to, and most likely as a result of, his memorial, he was called to Rome, where in another memorial which is preserved in the Archives of Propaganda, he advised the separation of Nova Scotia from the Diocese of Quebec, and the erection of two more dioceses in Lower Canada independent of Quebec. He relates that the

Bishop is unable to do anything without the consent of the civil Government and advises the withdrawal of the Maritimes “ from the spiritual jurisdiction of Quebec so as to lay them open to English speaking priests who according to the laws can now enter and who could exercise their ministry without the consent of the Government as they do in England.”

He advised the erection of these Provinces (i.e. the Maritimes, Montreal, Upper Canada) into prefectures immediately subject to the Holy See, installing as Prefects, priests with the necessary jurisdiction who could build up schools and seminaries. Rome took action about Nova Scotia in the general session of the Sacred Congregation dated December 11th, 1815 by erecting it into a vicariate apostolic with Rev. Edmund Burke as Vicar with title and episcopal character. On July 26, 1817, Father Burke was notified of the action of the Pope in erecting the Vicariate of Nova Scotia, immediately subject to the Holy See and appointing him Bishop of Sion and Vicar Apostolic of Nova Scotia. In the same letter the Prefect of Propaganda states:

“ I have learned that Prince Edward Island is in nearly the same necessity as Nova Scotia, so that the Sacred Congregation is thinking of constituting a Vicar Apostolic there also, for which office Rev. Æneas MacEachern has been mentioned. But as we do not know everything about that priest we beg your Lordship to send us accurate information regarding him and whether he is really worthy to be placed over that mission.”

When Dr. Burke⁴ received the Bulls authorizing his consecration, it was too late in the season to go to Quebec from Halifax, so it was not until July 5, 1818 that he was consecrated by Bishop Plessis in Quebec.

Bishop Plessis was either unable to persuade the British Government in his visit to Europe in 1819 to consent to having independent Bishoprics set up or else, which is more probable, he favoured the retention of centralized control in Quebec with the appointment of Auxiliary Bishops; this would be more in accord with British policy of doing business with one, instead of four other independent dioceses.

In any event, Bishop Plessis, after his return from London and Rome in August of 1820, announced that four suffragans had been appointed by Rome to the Bishop of Quebec; Right Rev. Joseph Norbert Provencher, for the North West, with the title of Bishop of Juliopolis, Right Reverend Alexander Macdonell for Upper Canada with the title of Bishop of Rhesina; Right Rev. Jean Jacques Lartigue for the District of Montreal with the title of Bishop of Telmesse; and Right Rev. Angus Bernard MacEachern with the title of Bishop of Rosen for the district comprising New Brunswick, Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island.

⁴ Rev. Brother Alfred, F.S.C. LL.D. a past President of the C.C.H.A., in an excellent paper published in one of the recent annual reports of the Association described the career of Bishop Burke in Canada.

The Brief conferring the episcopacy on Father MacEachern is dated January 12th, 1819; it was not until the Spring of 1821 that he was able to set out for Quebec for consecration; he wrote Bishop Plessis who was created by Rome the first Archbishop of Quebec in 1819:

“ as there is no vessel on this Island bound for Quebec, I suppose I must cross to Pictou, then to Halifax and endeavour to proceed to Montreal either by Boston or New York.”

On Sunday June 17, 1821 Bishop MacEachern received episcopal consecration in the Church of St. Roch in Quebec, amid ceremonies never before equaled in the history of the Church in Canada; the consecrating prelate was Archbishop Plessis; he had as assistants: his coadjutor, Bishop Panet, and the Right Rev. Alexander Macdonell, titular Bishop of Rhesina who had been consecrated at Quebec in the Ursuline Convent Chapel on December 31, 1820. Bishop MacEachern's consecration was the first time that four bishops were seen together in one church in Canada.

After a short stay in Quebec, Bishop MacEachern returned to Prince Edward Island and resumed the duties of a missionary throughout the Island, besides doing the episcopal works, which belonged by office to the Bishop of Quebec in a region comprising Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, the Magdalen Islands and the entire Province of New Brunswick. From this time forward no Bishop of Quebec came to the Maritime Provinces for the exercise of episcopal functions, though for some years two of the three provinces continued as integral parts of the Diocese of Quebec. Travelling always at his own expense, Bishop MacEachern performed many duties pertaining to the office of the Bishop of Quebec, without any remuneration, while depending for a living on the contributions from the missions in Prince Edward Island.

Bernard Donald MacDonald who had been sent by Father MacEachern to Quebec to study for the priesthood in 1812 was ordained there in June 1822. He was the first native Islander raised to the priesthood. When he returned home after three months caring for Irish Emigrants sick with fever in Quebec, he had to be assigned to the Acadian French missions on the Island, as Quebec permitted the French priest in charge to return back to his native diocese.

“ Father MacDonald had to leave the people who had educated him for themselves and go to labour among the Acadians a second time abandoned by their own countrymen.”

Bishop MacEachern was now sixty-four years old and was again single-handed in his missionary work; he was now building a large house at St. Andrews, not for his own comfort but looking forward to the time when his diocese would be cut off from Quebec, he intended to use his house as a college for the education of young men some of whom would study for the priesthood. On February 4th, 1824, William MacLeod of Arisaig, Nova Scotia, was ordained deacon by Bishop MacEachern in the church at St.

Andrews, P.E.I. and on February 8th of the same year he was ordained priest and sent to the Mission of East Bay in Cape Breton Island. This was the first ordination ceremony on P.E.I.

As an indication of the way the Civil Authorities were beginning to regard the tread of the Catholic Church on the Island, was the item in the estimates for expenses for the year 1825, which read as follows:

“ Allowance to Reverend Æneas MacEachern, Roman Catholic missionary in the Islands of Prince Edward and Cape Breton, in reward for meritorious service £50.0.0”.

The Colonial Government paid the Bishop a similar amount each year until his death; the contrast in the instructions issued to the first British Governor of the Colony with respect to the Catholic religion, and this action towards the representative of the Church on the Island sixty years later, is indeed very marked.

Feather MacMillan advances the view that the kindly disposition displayed towards the Bishop by the Civil Authorities may have resulted from the visit Bishop Macdonnell of Kingston, Upper Canada, made to London in 1824, for the purpose of laying before the British Government the “unsatisfactory conditions of the Church in certain parts of Canada.”

Bishop MacEachern thought the time propitious to petition the governing group on the Island that the Catholics were unrepresented in the local Legislative Body. In Cape Breton, Lawrence Kavanagh had been elected by the people to a place in the Legislative Body of Nova Scotia, a few years before O’Connell won Catholic Emancipation in the Imperial Parliament at London.

The Bishop had now a group of boys under instruction in his house at St. Andrews; in response to his written request to the Directors of the Propaganda College, Rome, he was informed by letter dated December 16th, 1826, that the College would be pleased to take two boys for free education, for service in the Maritime Missions.

On June 24th, 1827 in the Church of St. Ninan, Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Bishop MacEachern was the consecrating prelate of Bishop William Fraser; the part of assistants were assigned to two priests of the Monastery of La Trappe, Tracadie. Bishop Fraser, born in Scotland in 1779, entered the same school of Samalaman as Bishop MacEachern did; at the age of fifteen he went to Valladolid, Spain, and was ordained there in 1804. In 1822 he came to Nova Scotia; his close friendship with Bishop MacEachern influenced his career.

Father MacMillan outlines some of the activities of Bishop MacEachern in the year 1827 when he was sixty-nine years old. There was much sickness among the people; travelling in the Spring of the year, taking shelter at night in whatever accommodation he could find, sometimes before the open fire-place of a kitchen, a bundle of straw and the furs from his sleigh on the

floor forming his bed; passing from settlement to settlement; episcopal visitation required his presence on the mainland. He went over to Nova Scotia and consecrated Bishop Fraser in the Church of St. Ninian, Antigonish on June 24th. He then proceeded to Halifax, then set out for Annapolis, then to Digby, and crossed the Bay of Fundy for St. John on July 19th. He spent there two weeks attending to the spiritual needs of the people, administering confirmation; on August 3rd he went to East Port, to visit the Indians of Moose Island going by means of a bark canoe; then to St. Andrews where a number of people were confirmed. He then returned to St. John and after a few days ascended the St. John River to Fredericton where his duties detained him one week. On August 23rd he left Fredericton by an overland route, through the woods, until he reached the head waters of the Miramichi River. A dugout was secured twenty-four feet long and two feet wide and with one companion he descended the river and thence along the missions bordering on the coast. In the late Autumn he was back on Prince Edward Island. When opportunity permitted, Bishop MacEachern liked to visit Cape Breton Island as some of his brothers and sisters had settled there.

The appointment of a Bishop for P.E.I. in 1819 did not solve the problem of its religious development. The plan proposed by Bishop Burke and approved at the time by Bishop MacEachern was much better calculated to achieve results, as a superior would be in authority to make decisions in his own territory. When Bishop Macdonell of Kingston went to England and then to Rome to secure a separation of his territory from Quebec, he had been commissioned by Bishop MacEachern to inform the British Government and the Congregation of the Propaganda in Rome, how matters stood in the territory he was serving.

Bishop Alexander Macdonell was born in Glengarry, Scotland in 1762. He attended the seminary of Scalán and was ordained in Valladolid, Spain in 1787 in the same year, and most likely in the same class, as Father MacEachern. In Glasgow he organized the First Glengarry Fencible Regiment for the British Army. In 1804 he came to Upper Canada with some of the disbanded regiment and was made a Vicar General of Quebec in 1807. He became suffragan Bishop of Upper Canada in 1819, with the title of Bishop of Rhesina; on February 14th, 1826 he was made Bishop of Regiopolis (Kingston, Ontario) with his diocese separated from Quebec.

When Bishop Macdonell returned home in 1824 he wrote Bishop MacEachern: "I think I mentioned to you the wish and even the anxiety of Earl Bathurst (British Colonial Secretary) that Upper Canada should be erected into a Diocesan Bishopric in order to be independent of that of Quebec, and his full entire consent that New Brunswick, the Islands of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Nova Scotia should form one independent diocese. To this I saw no difficulty as Bishop Fraser might become your Coadjutor, cum successione."

Archbishop Plessis at first consented to this plan but later changed his mind, thus preventing a settlement of the question. Bishop MacEachern in a letter to a friend in Rome, dated December 17, 1825 wrote:

“I believe that the Right Honorable Earl Bathurst is sincere in the proposed plans and that said nobleman will give his support for it. But I am far from thinking that the Archbishop of Quebec was ever desirous of adopting the plan in question. For I have seen his correspondence with the Holy See on the subject, his remarks on our ability to provide clergymen, also the state Nova Scotia would be in, in case of separation and moreover, when at Rome, he took every pains and means in his power, in case the late Dr. Burke should die without appointing a coadjutor, to have Nova Scotia re-annexed to Quebec on the same footing as this Island is. I have all this in black and white. And yet since the year 1790 there never was a Canadian priest in Nova Scotia but three and they but for a short time in succession.”

On May 4, 1829 Governor Ready of P.E.I. was informed by the British Government that His Majesty's Catholic subjects were now relieved from all Civil disabilities with certain exceptions; as there was no positive declaration that the Colonies were included by the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829, the British official advised Governor Ready to have The Legislature of Prince Edward Island pass an act declaring “that this Statute does extend to and is in force in that Colony.” It was not until April 28, 1830 that such legislation came into effect on P.E.I. and along with it, was formulated an insulting declaration which Catholics were asked to subscribe to before voting.

Civil emancipation for Catholics throughout the British Empire in 1829 was closely followed by ecclesiastical emancipation in P.E.I. Rome decided that the time had come to cut off the whole of the Maritime Provinces from the Diocese of Quebec, notwithstanding the opposition of Archbishop Plessis, as revealed in Bishop MacEachern's letter to a friend in Rome, already quoted. On August 11, 1829, Charlottetown, then with a population of over three thousand people and its importance in trade increasing yearly, was made an Episcopal See, with Right Reverend Angus Bernard MacEachern as its first Bishop. The majority of Catholics in Charlottetown were Irish. His jurisdiction extended over Prince Edward Island, the Magdalen Islands and New Brunswick. Cape Breton was annexed to the Vicariate of Nova Scotia.

On June 19, 1841, as quoted by Father A. A. Johnston in his paper in the Canadian Catholic Historical Association's Report for 1935-36, Bishop Fraser of Nova Scotia and Bishop Bernard Donald MacDonald, the second Bishop of Charlottetown, wrote a joint letter to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda, Rome, protesting the memorial sent the same year to Rome by the Bishop of Quebec proposing that all British Territory in America would be confederated into one ecclesiastical province with Bishops suffragan to a Metropolitan at Quebec. The two Bishops, Fraser and MacDonald, stated there was no sufficient reason why so great and sudden an innovation in the administration of their ecclesiastical affairs should be essayed.

On May 19th, 1830 two hundred and six emigrants, mostly Irish, led by Father John MacDonald of Glenaladale (ordained in Paris five years earlier), landed on the south shore of the Hillsborough River, Prince Edward Island from the vessel Corsair, and settled on land inherited by Father MacDonald from his father. This was the beginning of the Catholic parish of Fort Augustus.

The big problem which faced Bishop MacEachern on assuming full control of his diocese in 1829 was the scarcity of priests for the increasing number of scattered missions throughout his territory; as a missionary for forty years, no one, more than himself, knew better the needs of his diocese. Pleas for help during these forty years went largely unanswered by his superiors in Quebec. Now the responsibility was his own; he wrote to London hoping to induce at least a few of the French refugee priests (a number of whom were still unable to return to their native land) to come to P.E.I. to look after the Acadian French missions in his diocese. No attention was paid to his request. The Archbishop of Quebec permitted those of his priests who were laboring in New Brunswick and the Magdalen Islands to remain in the places that had been allotted to them; but he told Bishop MacEachern that if any of them insisted upon returning to the Diocese of Quebec, permission to do so could not be refused. In writing to the Catholic missions in New Brunswick from Richibucto under date of July 23rd, 1831 Bishop MacEachern, asking for money contributions for the preparatory seminary he had in mind for St. Andrews, states:

“my income is so slender that I cannot, from any revenue I have, promise to support an establishment of this magnitude (i.e. Propaganda at Rome thought he could establish a large seminary). But if the whole Diocese would contribute something annually, it appears to me that a preparatory seminary might be established and supported among us... the house I live in (at St. Andrews, P.E.I.) is 38 by 30 feet, two stories high with a good cellar, and, with the exception of one room and bed, may be used till something on a better plan can be made... whether I will be aided or not by my Diocesans, if I can get a proper teacher, I will open a school.”

There was no help forthcoming from New Brunswick for the proposed school.

During the Bishop's travels in the Maritime Provinces, he met, in Halifax, Rev. Edward Walsh who had come from Ireland with a band of Irish emigrants. Father Walsh, a cultured priest, had taught in an Irish College. On November 30, 1831 (St. Andrew's Day) St. Andrew's College, with Father Walsh as Rector, began classes with about twenty students: it was the first college on Prince Edward Island. To begin a school amid difficulties so great and resources so slender is a monument in itself to the foresight and zeal of Bishop MacEachern. At the age of seventy two years, after a life time of devotion to his missionary work he donated his residence (his Episcopal Palace) in order that a preparatory seminary for the training of young men for

the priesthood might he started, reserving for his own use "one room and a bed". To these humble beginnings, a long and distinguished line of priests, bishops, archbishops and English speaking Canada's first Cardinal can trace the earliest Catholic scholastic foundations on the Island.

St. Andrew's College was closed in 1844; in 1855 it was succeeded by St. Dunstan's College built in the suburbs of Charlottetown; in 1922 St. Dunstan's assumed University status. A new Church of St. Andrews was opened in 1862, the cornerstone having been blessed by Bishop McIntyre on August 23rd, 1860, his first official act after consecration. The old church opened in 1804 was, in the winter of 1864, hauled down on the ice of the Hillsborough River; today a part of it is the chapel of St. Joseph's Convent. From 1804 to 1946 this chapel has been used; it is probably the oldest church on the Island and the first Cathedral of the diocese. The ground floor was in 1864 used for school purposes; the upper floor used as a public hall for concerts and lectures. On September 1st, 1864, the first Conference of the Fathers of Canadian Confederation began in the Provincial Building, Charlottetown; at a public meeting a few nights later, held in the newly opened hall, formerly part of St. Andrews Church, at which all the Fathers of Confederation attending the Charlottetown Conference were present, the Hon. Thomas Darcy McGee, one of the greatest of the Fathers, was the principal speaker; it was probably the first meeting of any consequence to be held in that historic building after it had come to rest in Charlottetown.

On June 28, 1828, the Bishop ordained at St. Andrews the Rev. Sylvan Perry or Poirier of Tignish, educated at Nicolet, P.Q., the first native born Acadian to be ordained on the Island.

In the year 1833 Bishop MacEachern had four students at the Propaganda, Rome, preparing for the missions in his Diocese. Since that time few periods have elapsed without one or two students from the Island being prepared at Propaganda for College or Parish work in the Diocese of Charlottetown.

In the year 1842 the Diocese of Charlottetown was dismembered and New Brunswick made a separate diocese with the Episcopal See at St. John. The Diocese of Charlottetown from that date to 1946 comprised Prince Edward Island and the Magdalen Islands.

In the early months of the year 1835, the splendid health and strength of Bishop MacEachern throughout his seventy-six years of life began to show, more markedly, the impairments of his advanced years. He wrote "after hard labor of forty-four years and seven months on this Island and adjacent coasts I serve a mission as well as the young gentlemen on the Island do." He wrote to the Archbishop of Quebec about the advisability of appointing a coadjutor Bishop, for the Diocese of Charlottetown; "the principal difficulty in the way of such an appointment: how to provide suitable support for such a prelate; the clergy are only struggling missionaries wandering from place to place." He felt that, whoever is appointed should be acquainted with the English,

French and Gaelic languages; and the only candidate who possessed all the necessary qualifications, was the Rev. Bernard Donald MacDonald “whose uniform regularity of deportment and disengagement from everything but his duty renders him dear and respected in the Community.” On his Easter visit to the missions of King’s County, when he had finished saying his Mass and had preached a sermon in Gaelic at a station, held in the home of Dugald McIsaac at St. Peter’s, Bishop MacEachern was taken ill with symptoms of an apoplectic stroke. He was, in a few days, taken by sleigh to his residence in Savage Harbour. He died there, on April 22, 1835; his body was laid to rest in a grave beneath the Sanctuary of St. Andrew’s which church he had built in 1804 ; it was reinterred in the new Church of St. Andrews in 1865. An inscription in Latin in the Sanctuary of the Church, of which the following is a translation, stated:

D. O. M.

Here lies, in the hope of a blessed immortality, Æneas B. MacEachern, first Bishop of Charlottetown: Adorned with all the virtues that should distinguish a Bishop, he labored with unwearied zeal to promote the Glory of God and to forward the spiritual interests of his neighbour. His death brought great and lasting grief to all good men, and to none more than the poor, for whose sake he himself had passed this life in poverty. He died on the 22nd of April 1835, in the seventy-sixth year of his age and in the fourteenth of his Episcopate.

In recent years, the writer of this sketch has visited, while vacationing in his native Province, some of the places connected with the missionary activities of Bishop Angus Bernard MacEachern.

In a large farm house, close to Panmure Island and the shore, facing Cape Breton Inland, a room was shown where the Bishop frequently said Mass when as a missionary priest he held a station in that district. A bedroom adjoining is still called the Bishop’s room; the prize possession of the house is a chalice, made of glass encased in an enameled framework, which he had frequently used in offering up the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass well over one hundred years ago; on the sandy shore a place was pointed out where at night large beacon fires had been lighted, to indicate that the priest was needed when he was on a missionary journey to Cape Breton Island or the mainland of Nova Scotia; in an open boat, if the weather was favorable, with sail or manned by sturdy rowers, the priest would cross the thirty or forty miles to bring comfort to the sick or dying.

In the Basilica of St. Dunstan’s in Charlottetown, the finest Catholic edifice in the Maritime Provinces, designed and built under the direction of that farseeing Churchman, the late Archbishop Henry O’Leary, the fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Charlottetown, in succession to Bishop MacEachern, and later the first Archbishop of Edmonton, Alberta, there is a fine stained glass window commemorating Bishop MacEachern. Forming part of the

present St. Joseph's Convent in Charlottetown is the first church which Bishop MacEachern built in St. Andrews in 1804 ; and in the convent is the boat he built for journeying from Station to Station in his early missionary days. There is also shown a pair of broad snow shoes he used in winter seasons. On a nearby wall is an oil painting of the Bishop and, not far from it, is a portrait of Bishop Hay of Scotland, who at the Battle of Culloden in 1746 served as a surgeon; he became a convert to the Catholic Church while in London and gave up the profession of medicine and became a priest. Later on he was made a Bishop and served in Scotland; he helped to collect money to bring persecuted Scottish Catholics to Prince Edward Island.

At Scotchfort, not far from the old French cemetery of Fort St. Louis, is a fine Celtic Cross which on one of its four-sided base has the following inscription:

1772 A. M. D. G. 1922

This cross marks the site of the first Catholic Church erected on Prince Edward Island after the Conquest. It is set up by descendants of the Scottish Catholic Pioneers to perpetuate the memory of their arrival, in this country and to symbolize the Faith, for the sake of which they left their homes in Scotland and became voluntary exiles among the wilds of Prince Edward Island.

On another side of the base of the Celtic Cross is the following inscription:

1790 1835

Right Rev. Angus Bernard MacEachern, First Bishop of Charlottetown.

Born in Scotland	1759
Ordained in Spain	1787
Came to P.E., Island	1790
Bishop of Rosen	1819
Bishop of Charlottetown	1829
Died at Savage Harbour	1835

His remains lie under the sanctuary of St. Andrews Church.

As already stated, the building of the first church of St. Andrews P.E.I. was begun in 1804; the Bishop was buried in a grave beneath its sanctuary in the year 1835. When that church was removed to Charlottetown in March 1864, the grave was exposed until August 3rd, 1865, when, in the presence of Bishop McIntyre, the third successor of Bishop MacEachern, and of two other Bishops, Sweeney and Rogers from the Maritime mainland, the coffin containing Bishop MacEachern's body was raised from its grave and witnessed by a great throng of people, was reinterred, with fitting ceremonies, in a new grave beneath the sanctuary of the second St. Andrews Church, erected on a

site not far removed the first and opened for worship in 1864. On February 6th, 1946 this church was burned to the ground and for the second time the grave of Bishop MacEachern covered with stone and rubble, and fragments of the marble slab which had on it an inscription to his memory, is exposed to the elements.

Rev. Dr. Terence Campbell, the present parish priest of St. Andrews, a graduate of Propaganda College, Rome, and a former Rector of St. Dunstan's College expressed the hope that when wartime building restrictions are removed, a suitable memorial in the form of the third St. Andrews Church will be erected over the grave of Bishop MacEachern. With Rev. Dr. Campbell as guide, we visited the site of the stone residence which was built by Bishop MacEachern's parents on the east side of Savage Harbour Bay in the parish of St. Andrews; it was there the missionary priest lived in his early years on the Island, on the rare occasions when he rested from his strenuous work throughout the Maritimes. The house no longer exists; part of its red stone foundation is still in place; a few shrubby trees grow from the former cellar. Only stone and earth mark the site where Holy Mass had been offered up, off and on, for ten years or so before the first St. Andrews Church was built. "In time some suitable memorial should be erected on this spot" said Father Campbell, "and in the near future, when the third St. Andrews Church will be built, a museum should be added to house relics connected with the great Bishop's life and times."

The finest memorial to Bishop MacEachern is the Diocese of Charlottetown; not because of its size, as it is small compared to the majority of Catholic Dioceses throughout Canada and the United States. As missionary priest and Bishop he moulded the spiritual lives of the Catholic pioneers of different races who lived on Prince Edward Island during his working life. The spiritual trend imparted to them has not been lost in the generations succeeding the pioneers, if one may judge by the large number of religious vacations which have originated in the Diocese in proportion to its population.

Bibliographical Note.

The writer of this sketch gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness for much of the material in it, to two volumes written by the late Rev. Father John C. MacMillan of the Diocese of Charlottetown:

- 1) *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island*
Published in 1905.
- 2) *The Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island from 1835 to 1891*;
Published in 1913.

The late Father MacMillan was born in Dundas, Kings County, Prince Edward Island and studied first under the direction of his saintly and veteran parish priest Rev. Francis John MacDonald of St. George's Parish; Father

Francis as he was known over the entire Island was the first student of St. Andrews College raised to the priesthood; he was ordained in Quebec in 1840 and for sixty years had charge of many of the missions in Kings County; he died in St. Georges in 1900. Through Father Francis, the connecting link with the missionary Bishop MacEachern, much first hand material not found in books and papers was transmitted to Father MacMillan; Father Francis also gave the example of a saintly, æsthetic life, which to a great extent was reflected in his pupil.

Father MacMillan studied at Prince of Wales College, before going to the Seminary at Quebec. He was ordained there, December 22, 1888. For about twenty years he was pastor at Cardigan Bridge, P.E.I.; he was a cultured, scholarly, saintly priest, whose researches connected with his two volumes on the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island as well as his editorship of the Memorial Volume "The Scotch Catholics in Prince Edward Island 1772-1922," were done between periods of poor bodily health, brought on, to an extent, by his duties as a pastor of a parish in addition to his literary labors.

The Diocese of Charlottetown is deeply indebted to the late Rev. John C. MacMillan for presenting through the medium of his volumes, clear pictures of its historical past connected from the year 1790 with the heroic figure of its first Bishop, and from 1835, with its clergy, churches and parishes, all of which influences, through the grace of God, have stamped the Catholic way of life upon generations of Catholics on Prince Edward Island.

An appreciation of the work done by the late Rev. John C. MacMillan could be shown by the Diocese of Charlottetown by re-publishing his valuable volume *The Early History of the Catholic Church in Prince Edward Island*.

Other sources of material used in this sketch are, in the main, mentioned in the course of the article.

To the (late Dr. James F. Kenny the writer of this article owes the inspiration of proposing "Bishop MacEachern and his Times" as a fit subject for presentation before the Canadian Catholic Historical Association.