

Moments in Our History

(Excerpts from the Dissenting Church of Christ at St. John's 1775 – 1975)

The Employment of Begging (Part 6)

Another letter of Thomas Crew (dated 23 May) expressed the English Committee's disapproval of naming a public Religious Society as trustees of the property. It was felt that trustees at Poole should have been named. They also questioned the legality of the deed and Mr. Crew purposed to have it "drawn up on parchment by a lawyer in a proper manner." This may well have been done, although we do not possess a copy. The following year, the Committee wrote to the "trustees in England" requesting them to insure the Meeting House against fire for £ 400. While not clear in this letter, it would also appear that the St. John's church was a copy of Mr. Ashburner's Meeting House in Poole. (The plans found their way to the Dominion Archives in Ottawa and were used to construct the model of the Meeting House to be seen in the Newfoundland Museum, Duckworth Street).

The ships that spring carried other letters for John Jones. His old friend, the Reverend Simon Reader of Wareham, remembering Jones' early troubles, rejoiced that "the Governor has fully decreed your building." His own congregation was now badly split. "The Unitarians were strong enough to foist an Assistant (of their own views) upon the seventy- two year old minister - a bitter blow after a ministry of nearly forty years. However, Mr. Reader's concern was that the theological differences at Wareham had hurt the collection for St. John's; this he regretted. He promised to send Jones four dozen candles "from my two daughters and niece." (Jones was never to receive the gift for early the following year the good old man died "exchanging," as Samuel Greatheed observed, "his ungrateful congregation for the Church of the first born in Heaven.")