CHAPTER FOUR

FINANCE IN CONTEXT: MASHONALAND/SOUTHERN RHODESIA AND THE EXPANSION ABROAD OF THE ‘ENGLISH CHURCH’

I The Background

We have seen in the previous chapters that one of the most serious hindrances to the development of the Diocese of Mashonaland/SR, between 1891 and 1925, was a lack of money. We have also seen that successive bishops looked to England to remedy this deficiency and that they did so with limited and varying success. If this failure to find support on the scale desired and the persistence with which it was sought nevertheless are to be understood, they have to be seen in a larger context. They are therefore examined here against the background of recent history and contemporary developments in both the mother church, the Church of England and also in other extensions of the church overseas.¹

The Church of England, in the course of the nineteenth century, had experienced comprehensive reform and revival. A drastic overhaul of the institution was begun by Parliament in the 1830s. Within the church itself, religious movements such as the Evangelical and the Tractarian and Oxford Movements had led to a resurgence of religious fervour and understanding. Changed circumstances were then encountered towards the turn of the century, particularly where the clergy were concerned and these will be examined in the next chapter. The church considered as a whole, however, remained a very large and vigorous institution and the afterglow of the Victorian revival finally died out only in the trenches of World War One.

The history of the church abroad on the other hand, both within and outside the British Empire, was more uniform: a considerable and rapid expansion began in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and continued until well after the period of this study. The extension of the CPSA

¹ The Protestant Episcopal Church of America is excluded from this study, as being wholly independent of the Church of England.
into Central Southern Africa, which resulted in the formation of the Diocese of Mashonaland/SR, was therefore not something isolated but part of a much greater and world-wide movement.

The movement had two main engines. The first was an increased enthusiasm for missionary enterprise which followed the Victorian revival of religion: from the 1860s ‘missions to the heathen’, or ‘foreign missions’, multiplied markedly both within and outside the British Empire. At the same time as Knight-Bruce was exploring the possibilities of Mashonaland, for example, four other Anglican missionary bishoprics were being planned, for Corea (Korea) (1889); Lebombo, in Portuguese East Africa (1893); New Guinea (mission 1891, bishopric 1898); and Chota Nagpur (1892), the first missionary bishopric in India. These five dioceses, moreover, were not the only new missionary jurisdictions in immediate prospect for the church abroad: another Indian missionary bishopric, Tinnevelly and Madura (1896) soon followed, as did three new Japanese dioceses.

Ecclesiastical expansion also took place in response to a great increase in national activity overseas. We have seen, in Chapter One, that national activity was a secondary cause operating in Mashonaland: the foundation of the diocese followed the BSA Company’s advance of 1890. The occupation of Mashonaland, however, was only one aspect of the Scramble for Africa and British expansion in Africa itself part of a greater, world-wide, territorial extension of the empire. British trade and influence abroad also increased greatly and large-scale immigration took place within the Empire, from Britain to existing colonies of white settlement. Bishoprics were therefore created for new territories brought under the British flag such as Bloemfontein in 1863 or Damaraland (South-West Africa, now Namibia) in 1924. Bishops were appointed for British communities in foreign lands: in South America, the jurisdictions of the Falkland Islands (1869) and Argentina (1910). New sees multiplied in Australia and Canada: there were 9 Canadian dioceses in 1870 and 22 in 1900; 10 in Australia in 1870 and 21 by 1909.

The pace of this ecclesiastical expansion increased significantly as the end of the nineteenth century approached. When Mashonaland/SR was created in 1891 it became one of 82 colonial and missionary dioceses of the English or Anglican Church abroad. Ten years later, in 1901, there were 101 overseas bishoprics; by 1914, 122; and by 1930, 135. Mashonaland/SR was thus only one of fifty-three new dioceses founded between 1891 and 1930 and one of forty founded between