

## THE KNOX OTTAWA BUILDING



Although it looks ancient, the current Knox Church was built in 1932. It is the third building occupied by this congregation since its founding in 1844. It outgrew its first building, and lost its second, on what was then City Hall Square, to expropriation when the Prime Minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, decided that the National War Memorial would be a centerpiece of the capital. Prime Minister King was a member of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, still situated on Wellington only a few blocks west of Knox's location at that time, but he took a personal interest in the new building. The distinctive square Norman tower was his suggestion.

The architect for Knox was Henry Sproatt. Born in Toronto in 1866, he trained in Europe and New York and was a Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Before designing Knox, he had designed many buildings on the University of Toronto campus including Victoria College, Burwash Hall, Hart House, Soldier's Clarion Tower and the Princess Margaret Hospital. Here in Ottawa he also designed the National Research Council Laboratories on Sussex Street.

The rough stonework is local Nepean Sandstone. The dressed stonework around the doors, the copings and the tracery of the windows is of Wallace sandstone from Nova Scotia, and the walls of the sanctuary are lined with Savoniere stone from France. The columns and archways, and the frieze over the elder's seats in the chancel are of Devon stone, precut and dressed in France then shipped to Canada. Travertine marble, imported from Italy, was used for the floors, bases of the columns pulpit, lectern and elder's seats – and for the baptismal font, which was cut from a single block.

The hammer-beams of the roof support a ceiling of British Columbia Cedar. The pews and doors are made of red oak.