

the Presbytery, who no later than the 7th of the present month succeeded in inducing all parties, for the sake of unity and peace, to hold all the steps which had been taken as undone? But, said Mr. Campbell Swinton, the organ has been introduced. How are you to undo it? Well, if it was any satisfaction to the Rev. friend Dr. Cunningham to have his organ in the church without playing on it, he (the Procurator) had no great objection to gratifying him, although this would be something analogous to the case of the clergymen who said to one of the London Bishops that he wanted to have candles on the altar. "Oh," said the Bishop, "you may have candles, provided you don't light them." (Laughter.) And so if Dr. Cunningham, wished to look at it in his church, they could not issue an order to have the organ removed. For anything he (the Procurator) cared, let the organ remain there, provided it was not played on. But he did not wish to subject his friend to that mortification and he had no doubt the organ would speedily disappear if the Court were not to allow it to be played on. (Applause.)

The Assembly then divided, when there voted

For the Procurator's motion,	171
For Mr. Wilson's motion,	75

Majority,	96
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DEBATE ON PATRONAGE.

"Your committee is compelled to declare that the more carefully it has looked into the matter remitted to it, the more thoroughly has it become convinced that the time has arrived when the present system of lay patronage may be modified with advantage. And it proceeds now to state to the General Assembly the different plans for effecting this which have been submitted to it, and, after much deliberation, to indicate the course it thinks the Assembly should pursue

"It will not be necessary to go into any lengthened statement of these plans, but will be enough so far to point out the distinguishing principle of each that the General Assembly may feel itself in a position to say which it prefers. The General Assembly may then perhaps deem it wise to recommit that plan to a committee for the sake of further arrangement of details during the ensuing year.

"It is to be understood that no plan hereinafter described assumes the total abolition of lay patronage. All aim only at the admission of so much of the popular element as promises to neutralise certain evils which have arisen from that system, whether in its earlier state, or as modified by the Benefices Act.

"The first plan is as follows: It proposes that patrons shall possess the right of nomination or presentation as at present; but that the members of the particular congregation shall be invested by law with a co-ordinate

in regard to the presentation, so that, as they concur in it, the presentation shall not be effectual for further proceedings in the Church Courts.

"What persons are to be considered members of the congregation, what should be regarded as their 'concurrence,' what ought to be the nature of the procedure to follow upon the lodging of the presentation, and other similar matter of detail, may be left for after inquiry and arrangement.

"The second plan is as follows: It was suggested that a direct and unqualified voice in the election of their ministers might be given to the people, and that for this purpose the plan of election might be based on a system formerly recognised in law so far as suited to the present times. For this purpose, it was proposed to re-enact, with this qualification, the Act of William and Mary, 1690, c. 23, giving the initiative power in the election of ministers to heritors and elders, but limiting the heritors entitled to vote to those who are members of the Church of Scotland, and granting to the communicants the right of electing elders according to the terms of the Act of Assembly, 1842, which the Church has in her own power to effect. It is farther proposed to reserve to any of the communicants the right of approving or disapproving of the person named by the heritors and elders, in so far as sanctioned by the terms of the aforesaid Act.

"The third plan which your committee had under consideration, and which is understood to have the approbation of the late Dr. James Robertson, proposes to allow the communicants of the particular parish a period of three months after a vacancy occurs, during which time they may select a minister for themselves. If they are harmonious in doing so—that is, if they are either unanimous, or if a certain proportion of the minority submit to the majority—the patron shall then be bound to present the person thus selected. If the communicants either do not select a minister or cannot do so harmoniously within the first three months of the vacancy, it is proposed that the patron should then present his own nominee as under the present law, the remaining three months of the six have now run before the *jus devolutum* takes place being allowed him for this purpose. After six months, the *jus devolutum* would come in as at present.

"Such are the leading principles of the three plans which have been before your committee, and each of which appears to it important enough to justify its being laid before you."

Dr. Pirie proposed the following resolution:

"That the General Assembly generally approve of said report, and continue the committee, with instructions to communicate with influential parties, to arrange a plan for the modification of the law of patronage, to be reported to next General Assembly, such as may appear most likely to command success