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Toronto, June 28, 1894.

The General Assembly.

THE General Assembly which brought its labors to a close last week at St. John, N.B., was one which will be remembered in the history of the church for several reasons. It was an Assembly of useful work, of unique incidents, of far-reaching decisions that will long enchain the memory; and not the least pleasing and suggestive feature of all the sessions was the harmony and openness of purpose which characterized the commissioners.

The election of Rev. Dr. MacKay to the Moderatorship, was of itself a matter of congratulation. With admirable tact he has filled the chair, discharging the duties devolving upon him, and meeting the demands of the position with the success of a veteran commissioner. His appointment has drawn the eyes of the churches abroad to the church in Canada. His name is known as few are—as that of a Christian hero and apostle—wherever the labors of missionaries excite an interest, and from far and wide come expressions of satisfaction that a man so deserving, and so illustrious should have been fittingly honored.

Next to the Moderator, probably the report of the Hymnal Committee. It is not surprising that the work of this committee should have received the close attention which it did receive. No more important subject than that of public praise could be discussed by Fathers and Brethren. The report, itself, ran the gauntlet of some severe criticism, but few indeed could have wished it were otherwise, for undoubtedly the debate will have a good effect, if only for the earnestness, the desire of

attaining to the very best results, which was so evidently the motive and aim of the speakers. From Canada has gone forth a movement for a Common Hymnal for the churches in Britain, Ireland, and the colonies, that gives promise of success. The English Presbyterians have taken action by the appointment of a committee to co-operate with the churches in Scotland as a correspondent says:—"The English Synod has made common cause with the U.P. Synod, and we sincerely trust these two churches will 'hasten slowly' until opportunity is given to the other Churches in Scotland and our own Church in Ireland to have representatives on the Compiling Committee. Nothing could be more acceptable at this hour than a hymn-book which has been distinctly endorsed by all the Presbyterian Churches. It would prevent the use of many undesirable books. It would lead to the use of hymns where the absence of ecclesiastical sanction has prevented their introduction. It would enable Presbyterians moving anywhere in these islands to carry with them their book of praise and to feel at home in their new surroundings, and it would do more to foster the spirit of union among the various sections of the Presbyterian family than all other schemes to that end. It will certainly come one day, and it cannot come a day too soon." Many extracts from the religious press of Britain could be given to show that the question is receiving the support of the press and of the churches interested. Thus, a common book of praise may be regarded as within the possibilities of the near future, and the action of the General Assembly will go toward bringing that much to be desired end to a speedy realization.

The relations between the church and the theological colleges as to the appointment of professors were discussed and the decision was that hereafter the appointment of theological professors unless specially excepted, as Queen's College has already been, shall be made by the General Assembly on the nomination of the board of the College. When an appointment fails to be made, the board shall intimate the fact in time to allow of nominations being sent to the board by Presbyteries, and the nomination of the board shall be intimated to the Church at least one month before the meeting of the Assembly. The tendency of the times is to bring the colleges more and more under the control of the Assembly, a tendency which cannot be attacked on the ground of unreasonableness.

A Standard of Giving.

"One needs but to compare the prevailing practice of giving, or rather of not giving, with the teaching of Holy Scripture and the demands of God's work, to see that from the very foundations upward our whole system of so-called benevolence needs reconstruction. Such