

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(Continued from last week.)

SATURDAY, 11TH JUNE.

The Assembly resumed at 10 a.m., and after the usual devotional exercises and the disposal of routine business, proceeded to consider the report of the Committee appointed to consider the appointment of a Superintendent of Missions for Manitoba and the North-West.

The report was as follows:

1. That the salary of the Superintendent shall be at the rate of \$2,000 per annum, and that this amount shall cover all expenses while the Superintendent may be labouring within the Province of Manitoba or its immediate neighbourhood, but that when he is engaged in visiting distant mission fields, such as Edmonton, the travelling expenses shall be a matter of special arrangement with the General Assembly's Home Mission Board.

2. That the Rev. James Robertson, of Knox Church, Winnipeg, be appointed Superintendent of Missions for the North-West.

The report was adopted. Dr. Cochrane, Chairman of the Western Section of the Home Mission Committee, was instructed to communicate with Rev. Mr. Robertson at once, to ascertain whether he would accept the position.

The following were appointed to form the Home Mission Committee for the year for the Western Section:

Rev. Dr. Cochrane, Convener; Rev. Messrs. A. F. Tully, R. I. Warden, W. A. Lang, F. W. Farries, R. Campbell (Renfrew), Geo. Burnfield, Dr. Smith, J. Cleland, H. Crozier, E. Cockburn, J. M. King, R. Moodie, J. Somerville, J. Campbell (Harri-ton), R. Torrance, G. Bruce, J. Rennie, H. Currie, W. Walker, R. Hamilton, D. Cameron, A. Tolmie, J. Robertson (Winnipeg), D. J. Macdonnell, J. Laing; Messrs. T. Gordon, T. McCrae, T. W. Taylor.

The discussion of the question about Roman Catholic ordination was then resumed. Rev. Messrs. Smellie of Fergus, Campbell of Montreal, Casey of Elgin and Athol, Lyle of Hamilton, Dey of Spencerville, and Wilkins of Belgrave took part. The Rev. Mr. Laing who had submitted the original resolution in favour of the re-ordination of Romish priests, replied to the arguments advanced against his position. There had been in this discussion, he said, a manifest desire to avoid the issue. In this connection he referred particularly to Principal Grant, who, he said, had tried by insincere compliments to overbear himself (Mr. Laing), while refraining from touching his arguments. Against Principal Caven's motion he urged that it left matters as they were; that, so far, the practice had been to admit without re-ordination, and this motion would simply confirm this practice. He denied that this was a merely theoretical question. It dealt with the reception of the priests who were knocking at the door of the Church, and was thus a thoroughly practical matter. If there were good reasons why a priest should be admitted without ordination the regulation he wished to establish could be dispensed with in that case.

On the amendment of Principal Caven being put against the original motion of Mr. Laing, there voted for it 106, while for the motion there were 67.

The amendment of Principal Caven, which was to the following effect, was accordingly declared to be carried:

"The General Assembly do not find it necessary to come to any deliverance on the general question of the re-ordination of ex-priests of the Church of Rome who shall make application to be admitted to the ministry of this Church, but expresses its readiness at all times to give directions to Presbyteries in cases of practical difficulty in which the question now raised may be involved, and following its course in the past, reserves to itself the right of dealing with each case of reception into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church on its merits as the same may emerge."

Mr. Laing recorded his dissent.

Rev. Dr. Jenkins, by permission of the house, then submitted his report on the new hymnal. It gave a very encouraging view of the state of matters, financially and otherwise, and was received and adopted—thanks to the Committee, and especially to the Convener, being very cordially tendered.

The Assembly then adjourned to meet on Monday at 10 a.m.

MONDAY, 13TH JUNE.

The General Assembly resumed business at ten a.m.; the Moderator in the chair. The first business taken up was the consideration of the report on Sabbath schools, submitted at a previous sederunt.

The Rev. Mr. Mackay, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Parsons, moved as follows:

"That the Assembly receive the report and tender thanks to the Committee, and especially the Convener, and express satisfaction with the fuller returns made by the Synods, and wish that the increased interest and progress which the returns shew may continue; and further, that the Assembly approve of the Sabbath School Course of Study, as carried out by the Committee and received by the Church, and that the outline proposed be committed to the Assembly's Committee as the line of instruction for next year, and recommended by the Assembly to the favourable consideration of the Church; and that the last Sabbath of September be recommended for special prayer for the youth of the Church in terms of the Committee's recommendation."

In amendment, the Rev. Mr. Laing, of Dundas, moved in the following terms:

"That all after the word 'shew' be struck out, and that the following be substituted: Adopt the recommendation as to the line of study proposed for next year, and recommend it to the favourable consideration of the Church, but resolve that hereafter no provision be made by the Assembly's Committee for competitive examinations, or for awarding prizes in money or books, or for reporting the names of successful candidates to be engrossed in the records of the Church; and also express satisfaction with the provision made for supplying literature for Sabbath School libraries as reported, and commend it to the favourable consideration of all Sab-

bath schools, and further recommend that on the last Sabbath of September special prayer be offered for the youth of the Church, in accordance with the recommendation of the report."

In the course of his remarks Mr. Laing paid a just compliment to the zeal and energy displayed by the Convener of the Committee, though, he added, he was not able to agree with that gentleman on every point in connection with Sabbath schools. He did not believe in the system of prizes for proficiency in the study of the Word of God, and could not acquiesce in the idea of fathers and mothers being superseded in the instruction of their children by boys and girls under twenty, simply because these had qualified themselves intellectually to receive a certificate.

Dr. Macdonald, of Hamilton, seconded the amendment.

Dr. Mackay, Prince Edward Island, strongly objected to the amendment, which he said, if carried, would practically be a vote of censure on the Committee in general, and on the Convener in particular. It was necessary, he contended, for Sabbath school teachers to be not merely God-fearing, Christ-loving persons, but also to be thoroughly trained so as to be able to impart instruction in a regular, systematic and profitable manner. On a vote being taken, Mr. Laing's amendment was carried by 100 to 32. Dr. Mackay recorded his dissent.

The State of Religion report was next taken up and its consideration resumed. The following resolution was unanimously carried:

"That the report be received and adopted. The General Assembly, at the same time, expresses its satisfaction at the evidences given in the report of steady progress in different departments of Christian life and work, especially as regards attendance on and interest in public ordinances, family worship, missionary zeal, and the grace of Christian liberality. Still, in the wide prevalence of lukewarmness and worldly conformity; in the tendency to substitute the form for the power of godliness; in the continuance, though happily in a few cases in a diminishing degree, of certain periodical evils, which have ever proved formidable obstacles to the rise and progress of religion in the soul and in society, the General Assembly finds abundant ground for humiliation before God. In adopting the recommendations of the Committee, the General Assembly remits it to sessions and Presbyteries to take order that these be faithfully carried out to the end, that our beloved Zion may be blessed yet more than heretofore with times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

In connection with this subject, Mr. Laing, seconded by Dr. Cochrane, moved:

"That this Assembly, under the deep conviction that the immorality, unbelief, and religious indifference, which are so prevalent, and which we deplore, have their origin in ignorance of God and His revealed will, and in the consequent absence of the 'fear of God,' which is 'the beginning of wisdom,' and deeming it of vital importance that our children and youth be taught 'to fear God,' to be subject to the powers that be, and to honour all men, do respectfully but earnestly urge upon the educational authorities of the several Provinces the duty and necessity, in view of the highest interests of the nation, of having Scripture truth and Christian morality taught in our public institutions of learning in such a way as, while respecting the rights of conscience of any parents who object, may secure this end, which the vast majority of Christian people desire, and further instruct the Committee on the State of Religion to bring this matter under the notice of the other Protestant Churches, and earnestly to invite their co-operation in thus seeking to have the rising generation taught the principles of eternal truth, righteousness and love."

A considerably lengthened discussion followed, shewing very considerable diversity of opinion on the subject. Mr. Murray, of Halifax, contended that there was no guarantee that the teachers in public schools were religious men and women, and that therefore the plan of committing the religious instruction of children to their care ought to be received with the greatest caution. The parents, Sabbath schools and churches, he contended, were the legitimate means for imparting such instruction, and it was a reflection on their fidelity to shift, or to attempt to shift, that work to other shoulders.

Mr. Black, of Montreal, deprecated the Assembly taking any action in the matter, alleging that before teachers could becomingly be asked to impart religious instruction there would have to be some means for ascertaining that they themselves were religious, and that led up necessarily to the advancement of religion by the State and to the whole machinery of religious tests. He thought Presbyteries and Synods ought to be left to dispose of such matters. Mr. Clarke, of Maitland, and Professor Hart, strongly favoured the proposal, while Messrs. Wilkins, Beckett, and McKinnon, opposed.

Rev. Mr. Fraser moved in amendment to the effect that as the Bible might now be read in schools, no deliverance should be come to by the Assembly.

Rev. Mr. McCuaig, of Kingston, seconded this motion, and said that as the Assembly was not a unit upon the subject it would be well for Mr. Laing to withdraw his resolution. It was easy to make a speech in favour of reading the Word of God in the schools, but it was shewn that if this was not now done it was the fault of the trustees. He objected strongly to the proposition to leave the teaching from God's Word, as implied in the resolution, to the teachers, in view of the fact that many of them were materialists, and advanced materialists at that. He thought they should first begin at the fountain-head, viz.: with the teachers. As the amendment was not written in formal shape it was ruled out of order in the meantime.

Rev. Mr. Wilkins objected to the teachers giving dogmatic instruction, but moved an amendment to the effect that the words "by the systematic reading of the Word of God" should be introduced as qualifying the words referring to the moral instruction of the pupils.

Rev. Mr. Rodgers, of Collingwood, in seconding the resolution, while strongly favouring reading the Bible in schools, said that in the present circumstances of the educational institutions of the country he claimed it was impossible to es-

tablish any satisfactory system of moral education. He spoke from twenty-five years' experience in connection with the schools.

Rev. Dr. J. G. Forbes, of St. John, moved an amendment to the amendment, which was seconded by Rev. Mr. Murray, of Halifax, to the effect that members under the jurisdiction of the Assembly should do all in their power to advance the interests of moral teaching in the schools. He urged that after the long and intense struggle with the Roman hierarchy, by means of which the free schools of New Brunswick had been established, it would be most unwise to give the opponents of the schools any opportunity to re-open that question and force their supporters to go through the fight again.

The matter had not been disposed of when the hour of adjournment arrived, and its reconsideration was resumed on Tuesday morning. Though it is a little out of place, we may add that after a few more speeches had been delivered generally rather opposed to the resolution, on motion of Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, Toronto, the proposal of Mr. Laing was all but unanimously laid on the table and thus shelved, at any rate in the meantime.

At the afternoon sederunt of Monday the new Presbytery of Sarnia was sanctioned, and it was appointed that it should meet for the first time in St. Andrew's Church, Sarnia, on the second Tuesday of August, with the Rev. Mr. Duncan as moderator.

It was agreed to hold the next meeting of the Assembly in St. John, N.B., in St. Andrew's Church there on the second Wednesday of June, 1882.

## SUSTENTATION FUND.

Rev. P. McF. McLeod, Toronto, presented the report of the Sustentation Committee, of which the following is a summary:—

The returns from Presbyteries shewed that 16 were heartily in favour of the scheme; 14 of these unanimously approve of all details; 5 give a modified approval; 12 entirely disapprove; 7 simply express a preference for a supplemental scheme; and 5 desire no change. The Committee therefore recommended that the scheme, as now amended by the Committee, be sent down to sessions for their consideration, to report by the 1st of March next; that the Committee be empowered to diffuse information throughout the Church on the subject; and that the Committee be the Revs. D. J. Macdonnell, D. M. Gordon, R. H. Warden, Thomas Sedgwick, P. McF. McLeod, ministers; and Messrs. R. Murray of Halifax, Wm. Robt of Montreal, W. B. McMurrich and J. McLennan of Toronto, elders, with the power of appointing corresponding members in each Presbytery. The scheme, as amended by the Committee, is very much the same as that which was before the Assembly last year. No congregation is to participate unless it contributes \$500 to the fund, and rises to the standard of liberality per family and member to be agreed upon. Every aid-receiving congregation shall send to the fund its whole revenue less the amount of the house rent for the minister where necessary, and ordinary expenses. Failures to fulfil the engagement toward the fund shall be dealt with by the Assembly. All congregations at present on the supplemented list, not able to reach the amount necessary to place them on the minimum stipend platform, shall be dealt with so as most effectually to develop their resources by means of direct grants on a given basis to make up a certain amount, all the revenue of such congregation being sent to the funds and arrangements made in them for regular contributions to the fund as in those on the regular minimum stipend platform. Every aid-receiving congregation is to furnish the Committee with an annual statement of its accounts, duly certified by the Presbytery of the bounds. For self-sustaining aid-giving congregations, the amount each such congregation will be expected to contribute to the fund will be adjusted by negotiating with the Committee, subject to the sanction of the Presbytery on a common basis applicable to the whole Church, it being understood that such adjustment is not meant to limit the liberality of such congregations, or to enforce from them any stated sum. The sustentation fund, like all other schemes of the Church, will rely on the free-will offerings of the people. Remittances are to be made quarterly, or if this is not done, and no explanation sent, the quarterly stipend will be withheld. He thought they should consider first the difference in the principles of the supplemental and sustentation schemes. The former went on the principle that each congregation should provide for its own minister, the Church coming in only on special occasions; the other, that the Church at large should see that each of her ministers was well sustained. The tendency in Canada was towards Congregationalism, and they should like these means which Providence had afforded them to bring the congregations closer together, and to bring the ministers and people into better relations with each other. The tendency seemed to be to look upon the minister as a mere hireling, instead of giving him all subjection in the Lord. He (Mr. McLeod) believed a sustentation fund would apply much better in Canada than in the United States. Judging by the experience of other Churches, little risk was run in launching a sustentation fund in Canada. It was said the supplemental scheme was more simple than the other, as it was at present worked in connection with the Home Mission Board. It might be so, but it did not do the work, and if it were attempted to be operated thoroughly as a separate scheme, it would be fully as complicated as the other. So far as practicability was concerned he believed there was little difference, and the principle of the one now proposed was better than the one in use. That question, he believed, should be left largely to sessions and managers, as proposed by the committee, allowing them, as practical business men, to make up their minds upon it. But in order that these brethren who had not had the matter before them at any previous time might understand it, it was desirable that every information should be afforded them. He attached more importance to the sending of the scheme down to sessions and managers than to the result of that step. It would be an educating influence, and whatever scheme was accepted the people would be induced to take more interest in it. He would not advocate this measure