

## "A YORK COMMITTEE OF PRESBYTERY"

was created, to be composed of the ministers resident in the Home, Gore and Niagara districts, to look after the interests of the churches in that territory. Rev. Andrew Bell was the first committee "chairman." Rev. D. W. Eastman, of Grimsby, and Rev. Eli Chadwick, of Charlotteville, applied to be admitted as members of Presbytery, and their application was referred to the "York Committee." Mr. Lyle was appointed Presbytery clerk at this or at the last preceding meeting.

The next meeting, held at Brockville on the *first, second and third days of June, 1830*, was opened by a sermon by Mr. Lyle, and Mr. Smart presided as Moderator. A paper purporting to be a "Report of a Committee of the Legislative Council of Upper Canada, upon a petition of this Presbytery" about the public schools, was received and referred to a committee whose report declared the paper an evasion of the points at issue, and therefore quite unsatisfactory. It was then resolved that a respectful petition be made to the Lieutenant-Governor asking for an "official list of the trustees of the district schools, and of the members of the Board of Education throughout the Province." The Presbytery endorsed the "prospectus of a religious newspaper, to be called the "Canadian, Watchman" on condition that it advocates "the received principles of the Presbytery, as expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith." Mr. McDowall was appointed to prosecute his mission in the Johnstown, Eastern and Bathurst districts; Mr. Andrew Bell to make a missionary tour through the Gore London, Niagara and Western districts; and Messrs. Smart and W. Bell to visit the churches between Brockville and York during the month of August. Communications having been laid before the Presbytery, from the Canada Education and Home Missionary Society in Montreal, about the establishment of a theological seminary,\* the committee heretofore appointed on the subject were directed to correspond with that society. Messrs. McDowall, Smart and A. Bell, a committee appointed for that purpose, reported an "Address to the Christian Public of Great Britain and Ireland," requesting their aid and co-operation to obtain preachers to supply the destitute places in Upper Canada, and it was adopted. The address says:—

"We are the only Presbytery in the Province, and have at present *fifteen* ministers belonging to our body, each of whom preaches to from two to six and eight congregations, not only on the Sabbath but through the week. We have originally belonged to the different denominations of Presbyterians in the Mother Country, and though we are not in actual communion with the Church of Scotland, we have always maintained the same doctrines, discipline, church government and manner of worship. Our labours of love are extended from the Ottawa, on the eastern, to Lakes St. Clair and Huron on the western extremity of the Province, over a distance of upwards of five hundred miles."

In the minutes of the session commencing in the Presbyterian Church, York, *August 30th, 1830*, is given the first list of members *present*, as follows. Ministers—Robert McDowall, William Smart, William Bell, Robert Boyd, William King, James Harris, Andrew Bell, and Robert Lyle; Elders Absalom Smith, Edward Henderson, George Miller and Jackson Potter. The curious may discern in this list a peculiarity seldom occurring, that, of the eight ministers and four elders, not one of them had a middle initial to his name. Another peculiarity need not be so plainly pointed out. Mr. Lyle resigned his position as Clerk, and Mr. Smart was appointed to the vacancy. Upon the recommendation of the York Committee, Mr. McMillan was taken on trial for license at this session, and his "pieces of trial having been all sus-

\*A previous informal correspondence had been kept up for some time between Rev. Mr. Smart, for the United Presbytery, and Rev. Geo. W. Perkins, Secretary of the C. E. and H. M. Society, in which the importance of the establishment of an institution for training students for the ministry in Canada, was assumed, and Kingston was suggested as the proper location by Mr. Smart. Writing after the Brockville session, Mr. Smart said: "With regard to our theological seminary, the ministers of the United Presbytery seem very friendly to form a connection with your society." The next year the Rev. John Smith (who was educated in Glasgow, and had been a missionary to India,) was brought out by the C. E. and H. M. Society, and opened under its auspices (and personally with the concurrence and expected co-operation of the United Presbytery), at Kingston, probably the first Divinity school in the Canadas, with two students. The Presbytery however, soon became more interested in the project of an institution on a larger scale at Hillier, and in the spring of 1824, prospects being discouraging, Mr. Smith moved to Brockville, and the school was given up.

tained, . . . he was licensed to preach the gospel as a probationer for the holy ministry." Mr. John Brining, of Mount Pleasant, was also taken on trial and licensed. Rev. Daniel W. Eastman, of Grimsby Township, with Daniel Smith, elder of the church at Clinton, were received and their names added to the roll. Rev. James Harris was appointed Treasurer of the Home Missionary Society. Considerable attention was given to the subject of missionary work, and each minister was directed "to organize branch missionary societies, in connection with the Presbytery, in his own neighbourhood, wherever the people are desirous of having preaching from this Presbytery." "Mr. Phillips, a preacher lately from England," who had been preaching and teaching for a time at Hamilton, applied for admission to Presbytery, and his case was referred to the York Committee. He was not admitted, and was not long wanted as preacher or teacher in Hamilton. Ministers belonging to Presbytery were instructed "to use their endeavours to get Bible Societies formed in the several congregations in which they labour." An official list of Trustees of District Schools, and members of Boards of Education, furnished by the Lieutenant-Governor, at the request of Presbytery, was "ordered to be printed in an appendix to the minutes for the information of the public, that they may be enabled to judge for themselves to what religious denomination the greater part of the Trustees, &c., belong.

The next regular meeting was held at South Gower, *January 26th and 27th, 1831*. Ministers present—McDowall, Smart, Wm. Bell, Boyd, Buchanan, Lyle; Elders—Phineas Pelton and John Dickey. Rev. Robert McDowall was Moderator. "A very interesting and important report from the missionary of the Presbytery, the Rev. A. Bell, was read, and gratefully acknowledged by resolution. It contains much information in detail of the condition of the country and the churches between the Niagara and the Detroit rivers. It was resolved to make a respectful and immediate application to the Lieutenant-Governor, "requesting him to procure the United Presbytery of Upper Canada the privilege of choosing a Professor of Divinity in King's College, to sit in the Council, and in every respect to be on equal footing with the other Professors in said College." An interesting and highly important letter was read from Wm. Freeland, Esq., Secretary of the Home Missionary and Education Society of Lower Canada, on the subject of a Theological Seminary, and the correspondence was directed to be continued. [See foot note to foregoing items.] Mr. John Dickey was received under care of Presbytery as a student. Messrs. McDowall and Wm. Bell were appointed a committee to prepare a Pastoral letter, addressed to members of our churches and those connected with our congregations. The York Committee of Presbytery reported the ordination of Mr. John Brining at Mount Pleasant, on the third day of December, 1830, Messrs. Harris, A. Bell, King and Eastman officiating.

The next, and the last, meeting of the United Presbytery of Upper Canada was held at Brockville, commencing on *Wednesday, June 15th, 1831*. Present—Rev. Messrs. McDowall, Smart, Wm. Bell, Boyd, Harris, Buchanan, King, A. Bell, Lyle, Eastman, Ferguson, McMillan, with elders John McCrady of Brockville, James Cairns of Perth, and Phineas Pelton of Prescott. Rev. Andrew Bell was chosen Moderator. Mr. Ferguson had been received by certificate, and Mr. McMillan ordained at Caledon, by the York Committee, since last meeting. A letter was received from the Lieutenant-Governor saying that the petition of Presbytery about a professor in King's College would be transmitted to His Majesty's Government—also a communication from same source, "enclosing a copy of the despatch of Sir George Murray, the late Secretary of State, to His Excellency, recommending the formation of a Synod and Presbyteries, and likewise a union of all the Presbyterians in the Province, in answer to the Presbytery's memorial." This last communication was referred to a committee consisting of Messrs. McDowall, Smart, W. Bell and Lyle, to report as soon as possible. Mr. Eliakim

\* In Mr. Eastman's churches on the peninsula, such branch missionary societies existed, making contributions to the parent society, before this date; a fact which clearly indicates that Mr. Eastman and his congregations were considered practically a connection with the United Presbytery before he had an opportunity regularly to unite with it. He was one of the fragments of the "Synod of the Canadas," which was gladly gathered in by its successor in due time.

Cory, having been received as a *delegate* from the inhabitants of Pleasant Bay (Hillier, gave interesting information as to the state of religion in Prince Edward County, and also with respect to a Literary and Theological Seminary proposed to be established there, to be placed under the direction of the Presbytery. Mr. Cory was deputed to make an appeal for aid throughout the Province and in the United States, and Messrs. McDowall and Smart were instructed to visit that county, establish churches, &c., and also to look after the seminary project. The committee appointed to take into consideration the despatch of Sir George Murray, respecting the affairs of the Presbyterian Church in this province, reported and recommended.

1. That a committee be appointed to prepare a narrative of the steps taken by the ministers of the Kirk of Scotland, in proposing a union with the Presbytery, and the steps taken by the Presbytery in consequence; and that copies of the same be transmitted to His Majesty's Government, and to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor of this province.

2. That, from the increase of our numbers, as well as in accordance with the recommendation contained in Sir John Murray's despatch, it is expedient that this Presbytery be formed into a Synod and divided into two or more Presbyteries.

3. That it is highly important that the Presbytery appoint AN AGENT, immediately to proceed to London, and lay before His Majesty's Government the situation of this Presbytery, and take such measures as may be conducive to the prosperity of the Presbyterian cause in this province.

The report of the committee was approved, after which Rev. William King was appointed agent to London, and Rev. Messrs. Smart, W. Bell and Lyle, with the Moderator, were named as a committee to draw up the narrative and prepare the other documents with which it may be necessary to furnish Mr. King. Rev. W. Bell and James Harris were appointed to visit the vacant congregations as soon as convenient. Rev. Messrs. W. Bell, Smart and Boyd were appointed a committee to prepare a petition to the Legislature for an act of incorporation. Ministers were enjoined to encourage Sabbath schools, Bible classes, prayer meetings and such other means as have a tendency to promote the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom in their immediate neighbourhood; also to establish as many preaching stations as convenient.

Mr. James McAuley, from the Associate Presbytery of Caledonia (State of New York), was received as a probationer; also Mr. James Millar, from the United Associate Presbytery of Glasgow. Mr. Thomas Johnston, already a probationer, was received by the Presbytery. James Cairns was received as a student. Messrs. Smart, Boyd and Lyle were appointed a deputation to ordain Mr. Millar at Ormestown, where he had had a call. Strong resolutions in favour of temperance and of temperance societies were passed. A pastoral letter to the churches was adopted, which was afterwards printed, and the Committee of Correspondence was instructed to make a further appeal to the religious public of Great Britain and Ireland, urging the claims of Canada on their Christian sympathy. Messrs. Smart and A. Bell reported a letter to the Lieutenant Governor, which was approved.

## MINUTES AND HISTORY OF PRESBYTERY.

Among the last acts of the United Presbytery before its dissolution, was the passage of the following resolution:

*Resolved*,—That the minutes of the Presbytery, from its commencement, be printed, with an introduction, containing the origin and early history of the Presbytery; that the Rev. Messrs. McDowall, W. Bell and Smart prepare the same for publication; and that, in September next, a collection shall be made in all our churches, to defray the expense of said printing.

The committee "reported progress" to the Synod, two years later, and no doubt prepared the minutes and history for publication; but neither the manuscript nor a printed copy has been found. Doubtless the September "collections" were *short*, and the printing was probably never done, for want of funds. The official minutes of Presbytery and Synod were, however, complete, at the time of the union in 1840, and must be *somewhere* now. Who can find them?

Friday evening, June 17th 1831, after sermon by Rev. Peter Ferguson, Presbytery resolved itself into

"THE UNITED SYNOD OF UPPER CANADA," with two Presbyteries, and adjourned to meet as a

\* The "Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland," had been organized but a few days before (June 5th), evidently hastened by the receipt of a similar communication from Sir George Murray; and negotiations for union had been progressing informally between individual ministers for some time. The official negotiations commenced with the appointment of committees by both Synod, at their first meeting.