

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

DISPOSAL OF THE FOREIGN MISSION REPORT.

Principal Grant moved, and the Assembly adopted, the following deliverance in reference to the Foreign Mission Committee's report. The General Assembly gives praise to God for the increased interest shown, the number of labourers offering and the spirit animating the students. Expresses gratification in view of the work in the New Hebrides, Trinidad, Demerara, and in particular commends the liberality of the native Churches. Expresses devout thanksgiving for the wonderful work of Rev. Dr. Mackay in Formosa, where there are thirty-eight churches and 2,566 baptized members. Recognizes with gratitude the advance all along the line in Inoué, and hoping for great good from the organization of a Presbytery in Central India. Rejoices in the progress made among the Indians in the North-West, where there are eighteen bands and 3,500 souls under the care of the Church. Records appreciation of the interesting addresses given by Revs. George Flett, John McKay and Hugh McKay before the Assembly. Asks that the committee be empowered to arrange for the ordination of Messrs. Golorth and Smith for the foreign field, and recognizes the offer of the Alumni Association of Knox College, the Missionary Association of Queen's College, and St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, of contributions to pay the salary of one missionary each on a foreign field, in addition to the usual collections. Asks that the Assembly authorize the committee to relieve Hon. Alexander Morris, Toronto, of the trusteeship of a fund for the establishment and maintenance of a mission to the Jews in Palestine. Gives thanks to God for the work of the Woman's Foreign Mission Society, and the extraordinary progress of the work in the Western Division. Expresses regret that, although the receipts from ordinary sources are considerably larger than in previous years, yet the fund is in debt about \$5,000—\$3,000 in the Western Section, and \$2,000 in the Eastern. The committee urged that the operations be not curtailed, yet that the expenditure be kept within the income.

Dr. McLaren stated that the students of Knox College were likely to find no difficulty in securing the \$1,200 offered. Those of Queen's College offered a similar sum, and St. Andrew's Church, Toronto, offered \$1,500. The experience of the Foreign Mission Committee was that the salary of the missionary on a foreign field was only about half the expense. He spoke of a province ten degrees north of Formosa, with a healthier climate, and having a population of 15,000,000 to 21,000,000, with not a single Protestant missionary; it was recommended that the Foreign Mission Committee make inquiries with reference to that field, and, if possible, send out the young men referred to, who had the highest testimonials. Dr. McLaren stated that it was not intended that the students and alumni should ask for contributions from any congregations.

At the request of the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Smith led in prayer, expressive of devout thanksgiving for the work the Church has been enabled to accomplish in the foreign field.

DELEGATES TO THE PRESBYTERIAN COUNCIL IN LONDON.

Justice Taylor presented the report of the scrutineers of the balloting for delegates to the London Council in 1888, showing the following to have been elected. Dr. Burns, Principal MacVicar, Principal Caven, Dr. Smith, D. M. Gordon, Principal King, Dr. Mathews and Dr. Cochrane, ministers. Mr. Justice Taylor, J. K. Macdonald, John Charlton, W. B. McMurrich, Dr. Fraser (London), James McLennan, D. Morrice and J. K. Munnis, elders. The names of the eight ministers and eight elders next highest on the list were read, and it was agreed that alternates should be chosen from that list. Professor McLaren, R. H. Warden, Dr. Reid, Dr. MacNish, Dr. Thompson, Professor Scrimger, James Robertson and Professor Bryce, ministers. George Hay, Warden King, Robert Murray, James Croil, J. B. McKiligan, J. S. McLean, George Rutherford and J. A. Mather, elders.

EDUCATIONAL WORK AT PRINCE ALBERT.

The Rev. Dr. Jardine, in an interesting address, referred to the fact that Prince Albert had been the first point occupied by the Foreign Mission Committee of the Western Section. He spoke of the respect in which the name of the late Rev. James Nesbitt is still held. An educational work was carried on by the Church, by a high school established in 1884, the building used being the old mission church erected about twenty years ago, and now hardly equal to the requirements. He contrasted with this the equipment of the Roman Catholic convent. This was the twenty-first year of the Church's history at Prince Albert; he suggested that a Nesbitt Memorial Institute be formed. The people of the locality had subscribed \$3,000. The chief factor of the Hudson's Bay Company promised 160 acres of land, and a gentleman belonging to the English Church was giving \$300. The movement had the sympathy of the people, and

they appealed to the Assembly to give \$5,000. If 200 members would become responsible for raising \$25 each on the fields, the required amounts would be raised. Principal MacVicar moved that the Assembly express cordial approval of the proposal of Dr. Jardine to establish a Nesbitt Memorial School at Prince Albert, and authorize him to proceed at once to raise funds for this purpose. Rev. Mr. Herdman, of Calgary, seconded the motion, which was supported by the Rev. Dr. Smith, and unanimously carried.

THANKS TO DR. MIDDLEMISS.

On motion of Mr. J. K. Macdonald, seconded by Dr. Reid, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: The Assembly desires, on the occasion of the retirement of the Rev. Dr. Middlemiss from the position of chief convener of the Committee on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, Western Section, to place on record its appreciation of his untiring devotion to the interest of the fund, and tender to him the Assembly's thanks for the signal service rendered by him in connection therewith.

STATE OF RELIGION.

Rev. Dr. MacNish presented the report of the Committee on the State of Religion. There were many favourable indications contained in the report. There was in many districts a deep religious interest manifested, a large increase in the membership of the Church, better attendance at prayer meetings, elders and members in larger numbers were taking an active part in them; attendance on Church ordinances showed an increase, family worship was well maintained, and the religious education of the young was receiving much attention. There was also a noticeable increase in the grace of liberality. Among matters to be regretted was the want of full replies to the queries forwarded to Presbyteries and congregations. The adoption of the report was moved by Principal MacVicar, who made a number of telling remarks, among them that in reference to the education of the young, he wanted to see more Bible truths taught, and less stories told. The Rev. J. R. Munro seconded the motion in a brief speech, and the report was received. The following recommendations, after full consideration, were adopted: That Presbyteries be instructed to continue their efforts for the purpose of securing replies to the questions on the State of Religion from all the congregations within their bounds, and that stress be laid on the propriety of having such questions fully considered by Sessions. That the great importance of the holding of family worship be again earnestly impressed on the members and families of the Churches. That inasmuch as there is in connection with the Church, a large number above eighteen years of age who are not communicants, the attention of the Sessions be directed to the necessity of impressing upon such persons the solemn responsibility of confessing their faith in the Son of God. That inasmuch as it appears that the religious instruction of the young is in danger of being left in a large measure to Sabbath schools, the value and responsibility pertaining to religious instruction in the home be earnestly impressed on parents. That Presbyteries be recommended to prepare a scheme of special services adapted to reach all congregations, ministers, elders and members to assist in conducting them.

EVANGELISTIC WORK.

Rev. Dr. Smith submitted the report of the Committee on Evangelistic Work. The committee recognized from the reports of the Synods and Presbyteries that much good has resulted from evangelistic services. They believed that such services should be conducted under the careful supervision of the Church, and that the evangelistic function should pertain to the office of the ministry. Also that every true preacher will faithfully open up and declare the way of salvation. The committee did not see their way to the establishment of a special class or order of men who should receive special authorization as evangelists, and whose work shall be to conduct or to assist in conducting special services. At the same time the committee recognizes the fact that many brethren were specially endowed with the gift of speaking, and deemed it most advisable that this and all other gifts be utilized for the salvation of sinners, and the edification of the body of Christ. Dr. Smith spoke briefly in reference to the report. He said that the committee had not thought it desirable to recommend that any one should be especially authorized to go forth as an evangelist, while, at the same time, they recognized the amount of good that had been done through evangelistic services. Rev. John Gray, of Windsor, referred briefly to the amount of benefit that had resulted from the union evangelistic services in Windsor, and thought they were doing much good throughout the country. The report was received and adopted.

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

Rev. Dr. Jardine, of Prince Albert, presented the report of the Committee on Sabbath School Work. It contained most encouraging accounts of progress,

stating that there were 11,513 teachers now engaged, being an increase of 1,934 since last year. The attendance of scholars had increased 16,577, while the total contributions received for the various branches of the work of the Church was \$20,797, an increase over last year of \$2,532. The report concluded with a number of recommendations tending to promote the increased efficiency of Sabbath schools. Rev. Dr. McTavish moved the adoption of the report. He submitted the following motion. That the report be received, and its recommendations adopted, and that the thanks of this Assembly be tendered to the retiring Convener, Dr. Jardine, for his excellent services in connection with the Sabbath school work of our Church. Rev. J. A. Forbes, of Cape Breton, addressed the Assembly in reference to the report, which, he was sorry to see, had to be taken up at the eleventh hour. He thought that such an important branch of the Church's work should have received more attention and consideration, and trusted that in future Assemblies it would be brought up in time to allow of the fullest consideration. The motion was then put, and carried unanimously.

THE DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

Returns to the remit sent down by last Assembly showed that a large majority of Presbyteries were in favour of the decision come to last year. Professor Gregg strenuously opposed any change in the existing law of the Church, and submitted the following motion, which he supported in a speech of great ability. The Assembly, having considered the returns of remits on the marriage question, resolves, That further action on the proposal to prohibit the exercise of discipline in the case of marriage with a deceased wife's sister or aunt be delayed until the General Assembly shall have decided in an orderly manner on the propriety of modifying or expunging the article in the Confession of Faith, which declares that no law of man or consent of parties can make such marriages lawful, so that the parties contracting them may live together as man and wife, or else of changing the questions presented to be put to ministers and elders at their ordination or induction. The motion was seconded by Rev. Joseph White Principal Caven then proposed the following deliverance in a calm, logical and temperate address: A majority of the Presbyteries having expressed approval of the remit sent down by the last Assembly under terms of the Barrier Act, and contained in the following proposition, viz. The discipline of this Church shall not be exercised in regard to marriage with a deceased wife's sister, aunt or niece, the Assembly passes such remit into an ad interim act. The General Assembly sends down to the Presbyteries of the Church, under the Barrier Act, the following remit, with instructions to report their judgment upon it to the next General Assembly, viz. chap. xxiv. sec. 4 of the Confession of Faith shall be amended by striking out the last sentence thereof, viz.: "That a man may not marry any of his wife's kindred nearer of blood than he may of his own, nor the woman of her husband's kindred nearer in blood than her own." The Rev. W. T. McMullen seconded Principal Caven's motion. A keen debate followed, in which Professor McLaren, Rev. T. Sedgwick, Principal MacVicar, Principal Grant, Professor Pollok and several others took part. The motion submitted by Principal Caven was carried over that of Professor Gregg by a vote of ninety-five to fifty-four. The yeas and nays being called for, the motion became the deliverance of the Assembly by seventy-six yeas to twenty-eight nays. Professor Gregg dissented, a number joining with him.

STUDENTS' APPLICATIONS.

Dr. Smith presented the report of the committee on applications from students, which was adopted. The application of Charles McKay, of Halifax, to be admitted at Pine Hill as student; Mr. A. Robertson, of Truro, to be granted the status of a student in theology of the second year; Malcolm McLeod, of Sydney, to have the status of a theological student; Mr. C. M. Copeland, of Winnipeg, for the status of the theological student of the first year; Mr. R. H. Hutt, of Hamilton, to be allowed to study at Knox, while he had charge of Port Colborne; Mr. Hugh Brown, of Barrie, for permission to pursue the studies of a third year student; George Dempster, of Ottawa, that he be allowed to enter as a third year student; W. J. Hewitt, of Barrie, labouring at North Bay, that he be ordained; Mr. Walter Beattie, of Rock Lake, a student of Manitoba College, to enter as a theological student of the first year; J. C. Madill, of Orangeville, that leave be given to Knox College to fix his standing.

A letter was received from the Moderator of the American Presbyterian Church, recently in session at Minneapolis, containing kind wishes for the prosperity of the Canadian branch of the denomination, and suggesting co-operation between them in the matter of foreign mission work. The Moderator and Clerks were instructed to write a fraternal letter in reply.