

"The Committee appointed by the General Assembly furnished the following answers to the reasons given by Rev. Robert Campbell, D.D., and others for dissent from the finding of the Committee on the Returns to the Remit on Church Union, and for dissent and protest from and against the majority vote of the Assembly on the resolution reported from the Church Union Committee, and adopted by the Assembly.

First: Re Dissent from Assembly's finding on Returns to Remit.

Reason 1. The terms of the Barrier Act are that "an extract minute of the Presbytery's judgment shall be sent to the Clerk of the General Assembly before the meeting of that Court." While some of the returns are not in the exact form suggested by the Book of Rules and Forms of procedure for Extract Minutes of Presbytery, there is no doubt whatever that each of the sixteen returns challenged by Dr. Campbell is in reality an extract Minute of Presbytery giving to the Clerk of Assembly an accurate return of the vote of the Presbytery on the Remit over the signature of the Presbytery Clerk. The suggested Rules and Forms of Procedure are not Church Law, but as the book itself declares, were approved and adopted by the General Assembly "as a useful guide for the members, the office-bearers and the Courts of the Church in the transaction of ecclesiastical business."

Reason 2. The returns complained of in the second reason for dissent were accepted by the Committee and Assembly as legal only where the Presbytery met and was constituted and took the vote in regular form, and, thereafter, in order to ascertain more fully the mind of the entire Presbytery on this question, allowed absent members to record their votes by mail to the Clerk of Presbytery. As a matter of fact, in no case did the additional votes of absent members change the finding of the Presbytery. The Barrier Act does not prescribe how the vote is to be taken. Its evident purpose is to prevent the Assembly making changes in the doctrine, discipline, government or worship of the Church which do not carry with them the consent of a majority of the Presbyteries. There is no manner of doubt as to what the will of these Presbyteries is, and not to accept these returns would be to make void the will of the Presbyteries on the merest technicality; but, even were these returns not counted, there would still be a majority of Presbyteries voting "Yea."

Reason 3: All the Presbyteries counted as voting in favour of the Basis sent in their answers to the Remit without qualifying conditions. By separate resolutions or overtures, nine Presbyteries asked delay and four urged immediate action in the matter.

Reason 4. The Assembly of 1915 instructed that Presbytery Clerks make returns to the Clerks of Assembly not later than March 15th, 1916, in order that the Clerks of the Assembly might prepare a statement of the vote for a meeting of the Union Committee to be held in time to prepare a deliverance to be submitted to the Assembly. This was not a law of the Church, but a matter of practical arrangement. It cannot be held, therefore, that the receiving of returns after the time so fixed invalidates them. The Barrier Act simply says that "an extract minute of the Presbytery's judgment shall be sent to the Clerk