

Kindergarten Pupils Sing For Blacksmith

A woman to train kindergarten workers was considered the most imperative need by the Free Kindergarten Association which met yesterday afternoon in the Board of Trade rooms. Clothes were required to make possible the attendance of the children. Mrs. Alfred W. Estey presided in the absence of Mrs. Allan G. McAvity. Mrs. H. H. Pickett gave

the reports for the teachers, who told of much sickness among the children. The attendance was down to 75 per cent. The course of instruction covering the stories about carpenters, miners and shoemakers and blacksmiths was concluded. In this course the children were taught to mould in clay the utensils of the miner. They were taken to visit a blacksmith shop and while there sang their songs for the blacksmith, much to his delight, the teachers said. The new course

teaches them about knighthood. They delight in this play, which teaches the boys gallantry and the girls gentleness and bravery.

MESSENGER BAND MEETS

The King's Messenger Band of Centenary church met yesterday afternoon in the primary room for a lantern show of famous Bible pictures, copies of old paintings and a talk by Mrs. W. H. Barker, their leader. Little Misses Allison Austen, Jean Austen, Mary

Hinchcliffe, Constance McLaughlin, Eleanor Bobbitt and Angela Jostrum gave a pretty exercise about Easter. Miss Muriel Langstroth, president, was in the chair. Miss Mary Harding, treasurer, reported that the Easter offering was \$7.22. Miss Alice Henry, secretary, read a report of the recent work of the band. A committee of ladies composed of Mrs. C. F. Sanford, Mrs. George Sealey, Mrs. Roscoe Bond, Mrs. Blair McLean and Mrs. Barker gave the children cake and lemonade.

Mrs. McLean and Mrs. Bond, assistant leaders, helped Mrs. Barker in arranging the successful meeting which was largely attended. The members discussed plans for their annual tea Easter week.

DIRECTRESS RECEIVES GIFT

A pair of silver candlesticks was presented Mrs. S. J. Richey last night at the final performance of "Pilate's Daughter" in St. Peter's auditorium. The presentation was made on behalf

of those who took part by Miss Katherine Ryan. Miss Ryan spoke appreciatively of Mrs. Richey's work in directing the production and taking the most important role, that of Leah. The drama was presented this year for the second time under Mrs. Richey's directorship. Last night's performance was given because of urgent requests from those who wished to attend. There was a large audience. The drama was played six times and carried over for the extra evening last night.

TO BEAUTIFY CEMETERY.

The directors of Cedar Hill cemetery met at the home of William Lilley last evening and appointed a committee composed of J. S. Ring, Andrew Gregory and Daniel Campbell to meet with the united committees of the cemetery of the various churches, which large committee will co-operate with the directors of the new Cedar Hill cemetery for the purpose of beautifying the old church burying ground and also in the



erection of a fence in the cemetery in Lancaster avenue.

Presbyterians stand by Union

Church Union Will Go Forward—People, Presbyteries and General Assembly Determined

THREE great Churches in Canada, desiring to unite, are applying to the Dominion Parliament for an Act of Incorporation and to the Provincial Legislatures for concurrent legislation affecting property rights. The negotiations have been proceeding within the Churches for over twenty years. An attempt is being made to nullify the work of this long period by the unwarranted statement that the Presbyterian Church is really against Union. Since the opening of negotiations, the attitude of Presbyterianism has been consistently and overwhelmingly in favor of Union. The Presbyterian Church stands strongly for Union today. The Church Courts have declared for Union again and again. The mass of the membership is in favor.

People Are For Union

Voting individually and speaking through the representative bodies of the Presbyterian Church, Presbyterians have strongly and consistently endorsed Church Union.

Two votes of the people have been taken on Union. Both were decidedly favorable.

The second vote of the people was taken in the latter part of 1915. It was definitely stated, on the ballot, that the Church's decision would be reached on the basis of the votes cast. The result was: 150,542 voted for Union and 93,739 against, a clear majority of 56,803.

Presbyteries Are For Union

Presbyteries, like all governing bodies of the Church, are composed of equal numbers of ministers and elders. They are in close touch with the people and are specially qualified to determine the mind of the Church. And the Presbyteries are ten to one in favor of Union.

Immediately prior to the General Assembly in 1923, the question of the immediate consummation of the Union was discussed by 56 Presbyteries. Of these, 52 declared themselves in favor of immediate action consummating the Union. The proposed Bills, both for the Dominion Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures, had been before the Church for several months. The Presbyteries knew exactly what they were voting upon. They voted deliberately and with a full realization of their responsibility. Nineteen Ontario Presbyteries voted in favor, many almost unanimously—only two voted against immediate Union.

In April, 1924, the Presbytery of Toronto, representing twenty per cent. of the Presbyterian membership in Ontario, voted 95 to 32 urging the Legislature of Ontario to pass the Bill. Of those who voted in the majority, 43 were ministers in charge of congregations and 40 were laymen.

General Assemblies Always For Union

One General Assembly after another has pronounced in favor of Union. The will of the Assemblies has been steadfast, though the personnel and leadership have changed from year to year. The Commissioners to the Assembly are selected from the Presbyteries, mostly by rotation. Of the total of 1,679 Commissioners attending three different Assemblies, not more than 100 were present at two of these gatherings, and not more than 50 at all three. Yet, these three General Assemblies all voted overwhelmingly for Church Union.

Those opposed to Union have never numbered twenty-five per cent. in any General Assembly. In 1923, there was a most persistent campaign against Union.

Yet, the final vote in favor of the immediate consummation of Union and of the legislation to go before Parliament and the Legislatures, was 427 for and 129 against, or only twenty-three per cent. against Union.

Union Already Widespread

The movement for Church Union has its roots in the conviction that the unity of believers is the Will of the Master and that Union is necessary to meet the spiritual problems of Canada. The churches of the West, the frontiers and the rural districts have already largely entered into Union. There are Presbyterian members in every one of the 1,284 pastoral charges, representing 3,000 preaching stations, where Union in various forms is already in force. Most of these Unions have taken place under the authority of the General Assembly. Thousands of Presbyterian families, now in these Union

The Real Issue

THE Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches of Canada, having resolved, after twenty years of negotiation, to enter into organic union, made application in the regular way to the Dominion Parliament for an Act of Incorporation for the proposed United Church, and to the Provincial Legislatures for necessary concurrent legislation.

The Incorporating Bill is now under discussion in the Dominion Parliament. The Provincial Bills have been passed by the Legislatures of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, have been reported for final reading in Alberta and New Brunswick, and have passed the second reading in the Legislatures of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

The Legislatures of Quebec and British Columbia concluded their sessions for 1923-24 so early that it was not possible to have the legislation considered by them.

In the Ontario Legislature, the Private Bills Committee resolved to make an amendment to the Bill, and effect of which would have been to destroy its central and vital principle. It therefore became necessary to withdraw the Bill.

The core of the amendment is found in the following extract:

"The non-concurring congregations of the negotiating churches shall respectively be deemed to continue to exist as and constitute the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the Methodist Church and the Congregational Churches."

This amendment would nullify the whole Union Movement.

The issue becomes one of fundamental importance. The amendment says, in effect, that the Churches negotiating for Union have lost their identity, which has passed to the minorities who may be opposed to Union. These uniting Churches would no longer be the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, but their denominational names, rights and privileges would belong to the minorities in the three Churches.

It should be observed that the force of the amendment does not depend upon the size of the minorities. No matter how small the minority might be, it would constitute the Church, and the majority of the members of the Church, with its ministry and its courts, would be seceders. The amendment would make impossible not only the present Union, but also any Union which might be proposed in the future.

THE CHURCH UNION MOVEMENT IS NOT A SECESSION

It is necessary only to state the clear implication of the amendment to show how impossible its acceptance is for the Churches which have resolved on Union. To yield here would be an admission that the Churches have no power of self-determination and that the solemn decisions of their courts have no binding effect whatever.

Short, however, of the surrender of this essential principle, the Union Committee representing the three Churches, is authorized and prepared to go to the uttermost limits in negotiations with the minorities. The name, organization, status, property rights, and even provision for the education of a ministry,—on all these questions, the minorities have been assured over and over again of the most generous consideration. If there is a grievance which it is within human power to remove, the Churches are prepared to remove it at any cost, provided it does not involve the sacrifice of their own identity.

Churches, are today depending upon the Presbyterian Church to keep its covenant.

No Haste Towards Union

In the Presbyterian Church the movement toward Union has been deliberate. From its very inception in 1875, the Church—itsself a Union of many different Presbyterian bodies—looked forward to a larger Union. In the pursuit of this purpose, Presbyterianism has never faltered. Every step has been regular and constitutional. Here is the history:

In 1899, the General Assembly invited a conference with a view to removing "unseemly rivalry and overlapping".

In 1903, the Assembly decided to consider Union.

In 1904, the Assembly appointed a committee to report on Union.

In 1909, the Basis of Union was adopted by the General Assembly.

In 1911 and 1912, Church Union was voted on by the Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, and by the people. And was approved by both.

In 1913, the Assembly invited amendments to the Basis of Union.

In 1915, the amended Basis of Union was submitted to the Presbyteries and to the people. And was again approved by both.

In 1916, the General Assembly decided to consummate Union.

In 1917, without receding from its former position, the Assembly deferred further action until after the War.

In 1921, it was decided to consummate Union "as expeditiously as possible".

In 1923, the Assembly decided to consummate Union "forthwith" and to apply for the present proposed legislation, which was approved by the Assembly "in principle, and generally as to form". And the vote was: for 427, against 129.

Minority Rights Protected

The Bill now before Parliament incorporating the United Church protects the rights of any minority within the churches. Every congregation is free, by a majority vote, not to concur in the Union.

The property of such a congregation never comes under the control of the United Church.

The Bill provides for an impartial commission to award an equitable share of the general property of the Church to non-concurring congregations.

The Bill does not prevent non-concurring congregations from retaining the name "Presbyterian" and organizing as a Presbyterian Church.

The General Assembly of 1923 empowered its Committee on Church Union "to use its best efforts . . . (consistent with the principle and general form of the legislation as approved by the Assembly) . . . to reach a satisfactory agreement with the minority in reference to the name and status of the non-concurring congregations." The Union Committee sought such a conference, but this proved to be impossible, because the opponents of Union demanded the surrender of the principle of the Bill.

It is true that no provision has been made in the Bill for the incorporation of the non-concurring congregations. Representatives of those opposed to organic union were present when the bill was drafted, and persistently opposed the inclusion of such a clause. The opponents of organic union claim that they constitute the Presbyterian Church in Canada and that the majority who wish Union should leave it. Such a claim is inconsistent with the democratic government of the Presbyterian Church. By an overwhelming majority the Presbyterian Church in Canada has entered into certain covenants which it means to keep.

In the present Church Union Bill, the provisions for the minority are much more liberal than provided for in the Act passed by the Ontario Legislature in 1874, respecting the property of the churches forming the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

Presbyterians Have Not Changed Their Minds

Presbyterians have not changed their minds. They are as resolute as ever in their purpose to go forward to organic union. They will not go back on the record of the past twenty years. The memory of Caven and Grant and Macdonnell, those ardent pioneers in the Union Movement, is still fresh. Their labor and sacrifice will not be permitted to fail of its full fruition. Being dead, they still speak, calling on those who remain to bring to perfection the work they began.

The Church Union Bill is now before the Dominion Parliament, and the whole country awaits the outcome. The Bill, when passed, will take its place as one of the most important and far-reaching pieces of legislation ever placed on the statute books of this or of any other country.

Issued by The Church Union Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada

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