

From the very first, the Rev. Dr. Campbell, then pastor of Erskine Church, regarded the movement with suspicion, and made no secret of his hostility. He proposed a conference of the pastors and Sessions immediately interested. His request was acceded to and the conference took place in the vestry of Bank Street Church. It is unnecessary at this date to follow the lines of the discussion. It is sufficient to say that the conference ended in failure.

Thus matters stood until the great fire. The church and school room of the Erskine congregation lay within the fire belt, and were utterly destroyed, leaving them but a bare lot and a smouldering mass of ruins. The families composing the congregation suffered severely, many of them having lost all they had.

In this emergency, Bank Street Church generously placed the Mission Hall at their disposal until they could make other arrangements.

Having become alive to the strategic value of the position, instead of rebuilding on the old site as had been anticipated, they petitioned the Presbytery for leave to change their location from Rochesterville to Concession Street. The Presbytery granted this request and directed Bank Street Church to close the school, and to hand over the lot and building to Erskine congregation whenever they were ready to pay to Bank Street Church the money they had spent thereon.

The action of the Presbytery was no doubt prompted by sympathy with the suffering congregation, and a desire to give them every opportunity to retrieve their losses. So far as Erskine Church is concerned, under the wise and energetic guidance of the Rev. A. E. Mitchell, the change has proved to be very much to their advantage.

In obedience to the injunction of the Presbytery, amid the tears of the pupils and the deep sorrow of the teachers, the school was disbanded on the 25th November, 1900.

But while bowing to the authority of the Presbytery, the teachers who had labored so faithfully for so many years in the Mission School said, in their final report to the annual meeting of Bank Street Church, in January of the following year, that in their judgment, they could not but regard the act of the Presbytery as unwise, because the advantage given to Erskine Church involved a distinct loss to the Presbyterianism of the city; because it destroyed a large and flourishing school and left the former field of Erskine Church unoccupied; and because