

FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

(Continued.)

SIXTH DAY—EVENING SEDERUNT.

FRENCH EVANGELIZATION.

After prayer and praise, Rev. Principal McVicar presented the report of the Board of French Evangelization.

The report acknowledges the hand of a merciful God in the marked success which has crowned the efforts of the Board during the past year in the opening up of new fields, in the gathering in of new converts in old fields, and in drawing out the liberality and sympathy of the Church. Six ministers and three students have been added to the staff of laborers, making the total number now regularly employed forty-four, besides a number of others giving partial service; and another application has recently been made. Several ex-priests are in training, and applications from others are still under consideration, want of funds being partly the cause of the delay in receiving them. Instead of \$23,500, the revenue of the past year, at least \$40,000 will be required to carry the work successfully through the year now entered upon. Each missionary is now required to fill up a monthly report and forward it promptly to the Secretary of the Board, printed forms being supplied for the purpose. This report gives an account of the labors of the missionary for each week of the month, giving numbers present at Sabbath services, Sabbath School, and prayer meeting, and distinguishing Roman Catholics from Protestants; enumerating the families visited and classifying them in the same way; and noting amount of collections, contributions, etc. Besides these monthly reports, an annual report is furnished supplying the name of every convert and of every family connected with the mission, with other necessary information. The report of the Board contains full details of the state and progress of the work in thirty-three different fields, one of which is in the United States, and the others scattered over Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. The quiet, unobtrusive work of the Ladies' French Evangelization Society, under the presidency of Mrs. Dr. Jenkins, is warmly commended. There are fourteen places of worship now under the care of the Board, including one in course of erection at St. Hyacinthe. It ought to be remembered that the amount specified as necessary to meet the requirements of this scheme is really needed in advance, or at least in monthly instalments, as the missionaries are to be paid monthly, and the treasury is now empty. The report concludes by recommending the Assembly to re-affirm its finding of last year, viz.: that all moneys contributed to the support of French Evangelization (including Rev. C. Chiniquy's work) be sent direct to the Treasurer, the Rev. R. H. Warden, 210 St. James Street, Montreal.

Rev. Mr. Duncan, of Halifax, moved the reception of the report, its reference to a Committee, and that the Assembly express its satisfaction at the state of this important scheme.

Rev. Dr. James seconded the motion, in doing which he expressed his belief that the great work was sure of final success, and urged his hearers to record not the motion, but the efforts of those engaged in the work to which the report referred.

Rev. Mr. Doudiet, one of the French Missionaries, was then heard for a few minutes. He gave an interesting account of the work in his own Church. He stated that the persecution of converts had resulted in the emigration of many of them. He closed by urging the prayers of the friends.

The motion was then carried, and the Assembly adjourned. The ladies of the Central Church afterwards entertained the Assembly at a social.

SEVENTH DAY—AFTERNOON SEDERUNT.

The General Assembly met to-day at half-past two. The Moderator led in prayer.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Rev. Prof. McLaren resumed his speech in reply to the remarks of Dr. Grant in reference to the matter of the Juvenile Mission Committee, and the complaint of the Foreign Mission Committee, that the Juvenile Committee had interfered in its work. He contended that the work the Juvenile Committee had taken up was not authorized by the General Assembly; and if the Foreign Mission Committee took up a work it was not authorized to prosecute, the General Assembly would certainly not approve of its new departure. Not only that, but the work in question had been given to the Foreign Mission Committee, and the constituency to which both committees appealed was the same, the action of the Juvenile Mission Committee appeared to be an endeavor to indicate that the Foreign Committee did not do its work properly, and therefore should be superseded by another committee. In his opinion the Foreign Mission Committee should not be superseded without the consent and order of the General Assembly. The interference was likely to lead to embarrassment, and it had already led to confusion. As to the correspondence, he thought it ought to have been in private, but it ought to have been commenced by the Juvenile Mission Committee before it entered on the field of the Foreign Mission Committee. He contended that the Foreign Mission Committee had acted with great forbearance, and that an answer had been sent to his letter to the "Record," which he had not answered, because he had wished to prevent any ill-feeling.

Rev. Prof. McKerras said the matter should be dealt with in the gentlest way possible, and had the Foreign Committee corresponded with the Juvenile Committee instead of with a public organ of the Church, the differences could have been easily settled. Prof. McLaren had stated that the Juvenile Mission should have opened up private communication. How could that Committee have done so when it did not know for a moment that it was in error? It was the duty of the party that accused another of error to point it out. He thought that the matter having been well considered, Principal Grant would not mind withdrawing his motion.

Rev. Dr. Gregg opposed the withdrawal of the motion.

The Convener had been attacked, and it was only fair to him that he should know whether he was sustained by the Assembly or not.

Rev. D. J. Macdonnell thought that if Professor McLaren could have seen his way to admitting that he should have commenced a private correspondence, the matter would have been dropped at once. It was impossible to dissociate the letter written by Prof. McLaren to the "Record" from his report, and it was just as much the duty of the Assembly to protect the Convener of the Juvenile Mission Board as the Convener of the Foreign Mission Board. He did not agree with Professor McLaren, that it was uncommon to send reports back to committees for amendment. Why, only the other night the report of the committee on the state of religion was referred back for alteration. As to any action being uncommon, he thought it was uncommon for a committee to reflect on the work of another committee. He held that the collecting of money by the juveniles did not interfere with the collections by the Foreign Mission Committee. The Juvenile Committee have assisted the Mission Committee of the Eastern section of the Church. The respected Convener of that Committee did not object to this. On the contrary, he sent a letter of thanks. It would be just as correct to say that the collections by the Juvenile Mission interfered with the work of the Foreign Mission Committee as it would be to say that the work by the women of the Church in aid of foreign missions interfered with the work of the Foreign Mission Committee. An admission on behalf of the Foreign Mission Committee that a private letter should have been written to Professor Mowat on the matter in the first place, would settle the matter.

Mr. W. B. McMurrich said that the Foreign Mission Committee had no intention to reflect on the Juvenile Committee, nor to snub its members. As business men, he did not know that the members of the Committee could have done better than they had done.

Rev. Mr. Moodie introduced an amendment to the motion "That the report of the Western section of the Foreign Mission Committee be remitted to that Committee, with instructions to amend the same so as to inform the General Assembly of the present relations of Rev. J. B. Fraser, M.D., to the mission work of the Church."

Principal Grant's motion, to remit the report to the Committee with instructions to strike out the paragraph about the Juvenile Mission Committee, was then put, and lost by a vote of thirty-six to seventy-six.

Rev. Mr. Burton dissented from the finding of the House, on the ground that the Assembly in rejecting the amendment of Principal Grant virtually endorsed the action on the part of the Convener of the Foreign Mission Committee which had been wanting in due consideration towards a co-operating committee of the Church.

Several other members also dissented, including Dr. Grant, Mr. Macdonnell, and Dr. Ure.

Rev. Mr. Moodie, in supporting his motion with reference to Dr. Fraser, said nothing was said in the report as to his great work in Formosa, his position now, and his relations to the Mission Committee. The Committee had also failed to invite Dr. Fraser—although he was in the House when the Foreign Mission report was read—to address the Assembly and give an account of his work in Formosa. Dr. Fraser had been very disrespectfully treated by the Committee, or else the Committee had withheld from the Assembly statements concerning him which ought to have been made.

Mr. Jas. Croil seconded Mr. Moodie's motion, remarking that it was very strange that Dr. Fraser, after laboring for some time in Formosa with success, should not even be asked to take a seat on the platform.

Rev. Dr. Robb said he could not understand how it happened that Dr. Fraser was in the country at the present time. He could understand that he might come home after the affliction he had suffered and bring his children home; but how was it at the present moment, instead of laboring in Formosa, he was to be found in Ontario?

Rev. Prof. McLaren contended that the matter had not been brought up in the proper way; but as the motion was equivalent to a question, he would go on and give full information on the subject if the General Assembly required it. One reason why Dr. Fraser's position was not mentioned in the report was because his position was not settled at the time the report was submitted to the Foreign Mission Committee. A decision had been arrived at since the meeting of the Assembly.

It was suggested that the particulars should not be gone into.

Rev. Mr. Moodie suggested that Prof. McLaren might read the deliverance of the Committee since the meeting of Assembly.

Rev. Dr. Cochrane was of the opinion that it would be as well not to open up the matter.

The Moderator also held that the Assembly would be treading upon dangerous ground by pushing the matter.

In reply to a delegate, who asked that Dr. Fraser's position might be mentioned without discussion,

Rev. Prof. McLaren said that Dr. Fraser was not now in any strict sense a missionary of this Church; that was to say, that he had ceased to receive any salary, though his connection with the Committee had not as yet terminated.

Rev. Dr. Fraser, of Bond Head, held that something should be said in justice to Dr. Fraser, to indicate what the final conclusion of the Committee with regard to him had been. In consequence of the delicate position he (Dr. Fraser, of Bond Head) held, he had been silent on the Mission Board, but he was now painfully convinced that his silence had not been the best course. Feeling that, he could not omit to say that while the report measured out but a scant measure of justice to Dr. Fraser for his work in Formosa, its absolute silence as to his present standing was likely to throw around him a cloud of suspicion which it might not be the intention of the Committee to do. The broadest statement of mistakes made—if mistakes were made—was less damaging than this silence. If the whole story was told it would do less harm to Dr. Fraser and the Church than to leave him without a single word.

Rev. Prof. McLaren rose to state the facts of the case.

Rev. Dr. Fraser, of Bond Head, said it was quite evident that a full statement of the facts would require five hours, and justice could not be done to the case without that time.

Rev. Principal Grant suggested that the matter should be referred to the Judicial Committee or the Committee on Causes. He would prefer any course than that speeches should be made leading persons to believe that Dr. Fraser had been guilty of all the offences in the decalogue.

Cries of "No, no."

Rev. J. A. Murray said he was a member of the Foreign Mission Committee, and he was sorry no reference was made to Dr. Fraser in the report. He might say that while the Committee felt it inexpedient that Dr. Fraser should return to Formosa, Dr. Fraser commanded the respect and confidence of the Committee. Were the matter referred to the Committee, a paragraph referring to Dr. Fraser could be introduced in five minutes. He would therefore support the resolution to return the matter to the Committee.

Rev. Prof. McLaren said it would take a week to investigate the matter, and it would be impossible to carry on an investigation thoroughly because one of the parties was away.

The Moderator pointed out that no investigation was asked for.

Rev. Dr. Wardrope introduced an amendment negating Mr. Moodie's amendment.

A division was then taken and Rev. Mr. Moodie's amendment was carried by a vote of ninety-nine to six.

Rev. Prof. McLaren said he was in a difficulty inasmuch as all the members of the Foreign Mission Committee were not members of the Assembly and could not be got together.

After some discussion,

It was agreed to allow the Convener to call a meeting of such members as were present.

REPORT ON SABBATH SCHOOLS.

Rev. John McEwen presented the report of the Committee on Sabbath Schools. The report gave a statement with regard to the meetings of the Committee and the efforts which had been made to impress upon Synods, Presbyteries, and parents the importance of the Sabbath School work. It was proposed in a circular that Presbyteries should hold Sabbath School Conferences, and that Sabbath School meetings should be held in towns and schools. Fourteen Presbyteries had held conferences, and the report from Toronto indicated that important results had been arrived at. Reference was also made to the action of the Synods on the matter. Efforts had been made to secure the reading of the Bible in the Public Schools as a text-book, and the use of the Bible in the schools now no longer remained with the Government, but with the people. The report concluded by proposing that the Committee on the State of Religion be instructed to leave out the Sabbath School work, and that the Sabbath School Committee be authorized to collect statistics; that the Moderator issue an address to teachers and children, to be read in the pulpits, on the matter; that the Sabbath School be dependent on the congregation; that the Bible, and not the lesson papers, be the basis of instruction; that greater importance be placed on the shorter catechism.

Rev. Dr. Bell moved as follows:—"Receive the report; thank the Convener for his diligence in the matter; empower the Committee to issue schedules for the purpose of eliciting information, and urging on all ministers diligence in replying thereto; appoint the Moderator to press the recommendations of the report on the Church; instruct Presbyteries to give attention to the oversight of Sabbath School work within their bounds; and, where practicable, to hold Presbytery Sabbath School conferences, and to encourage the formation of classes for the training of Sabbath School teachers; authorize the Conveners of Committees of the General Synods to act as a committee, if they see fit, to enquire into and report on the subject of Sabbath School literature." In making the motion he expressed a hope that at a future meeting of the Assembly the order of business would be so arranged as to allow of an evening being spent in the consideration of Sabbath School work.

Rev. Mr. Laing, of Dundas, held that it was the Sabbath School Committee and not the Committee on the State of Religion that was responsible for the proposed change of the responsibility for the Sabbath School work. He advocated a special consideration of the matter of Sabbath School literature, and hoped that whatever was done no step would be taken to separate the Sabbath School work of the Maritime Provinces from the work of the Upper Provinces.

Mr. A. Matheson wanted to see the Assembly in earnest in the matter. He advocated the holding of Sabbath School conventions, composed of teachers and superintendents. Increased interest in Sabbath School work would be, in his opinion, a step towards keeping the young men and young women in the Church.

Mr. J. B. Fairbairn was of opinion that a great deal of the teaching done in the Sunday School could be done by parents at home, and while all prominence should be given to Sabbath School work, the home work should not be neglected. He hoped the Moderator, in his pastoral letter, would dwell particularly on the duties of parents.

Rev. P. Lindsay urged strongly that a missionary spirit should be cultivated in Sabbath Schools.

Rev. J. Little, of Bowmanville, and Mr. Fairbairn followed, after which the Assembly rose for recess, the matter being left over for consideration at the next sederunt.

EVENING SEDERUNT.

The evening sederunt was opened by prayer.

MISSION TO LUMBERMEN.

Rev. D. M. Gordon introduced the report of the Committee on the Mission to Lumbermen. The Committee reported that they had endeavored to prosecute, as fully as the means at their disposal would allow, the work of preaching the Gospel and distributing appropriate literature among the shantymen. The Committee had received the services of Rev. J. Gaudier, who had, as in former years, visited the district. The Committee had also availed themselves of the services of the colporteurs of the Ottawa Bible Society,