

to eloquence and verbosity at the beginning, and a hurried rush of important questions at the end of the meeting, such as is too often seen in Parliament. It is difficult to amend this practice, for Committees must get together after the Assembly has opened and during their consideration of the business entrusted to them, the Sessions are occupied by speeches on more general topics and long speeches can scarcely be avoided in such circumstances. But there is no excuse for pushing through important reports with undue haste on the closing days. Far better refer to committees with power, or delay action, than pass hasty measures affecting the interests of the Church. During the last Session it is reported there was not a quorum present, a report which, if true, is to be deeply regretted, for while Commissioners from the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts might naturally be excused from full attendance, those from nearer points ought to see to it that a sufficient number remained to the end to transact the business to be completed, with order and authority.

UNIFORMITY OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

IT was with regret that the General Assembly accepted the resignation of Rev. Dr. Laing from the Chairmanship of the Committee on the Uniformity of Public Worship. For many years Dr. Laing has kept the subject to the front with patient persistence and moderation and the subject could not have been in more capable nor more sympathetic hands. Some idea of what the committee aims at can be gathered from the recommendations placed by them before the General Assembly, and believed to meet the wants of the Church. They are:—

“That the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes be read at stated times when deemed for edification. That where desired and judged by the Session to be for edification, the audible repetition of the Lord's Prayer and of the Apostle's Creed by the people be approved; That the committee be re-appointed and instructed to revise the Westminster Directory with a view to adapting it to the circumstances and wants of the present day, and to prepare model services, which may serve as guides to be used at ordination services, in the administration of the Sacraments, the solemnization of marriage, and the burial of the dead; That the committee be appointed to prepare a service book suitable for conducting public worship in new settlements and other places destitute of a settled ministry, if they find any general desire expressed therefore.”

These recommendations the General Assembly adopted, and a Committee, with the Rev. Prof. Ross as Convener, was appointed to prepare a Directory of Public Worship on the lines here suggested and to report at the next General Assembly. Congregations, Sessions and Presbyteries will thus know what is being done in this important matter and ought to be prepared with suggestions in good time, not “after the event,” as occasionally happens.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AS A COURT OF APPEAL.

THE only important case of appeal that came up at the late General Assembly was the one regarding the location of a recently organized church in the Presbytery of Toronto. As usual it was referred to a judicial Committee for careful consideration and report. This committee found itself equally divided on the merits of the question and it was found necessary to hear the case in the open Assembly, and practically the whole of what ought to have been done the last day of the Session had to be given up to the matter of very minor

importance at the expense of all the business that still remained to be done.

The case was heard patiently enough though all speakers were necessarily briefer than they would have liked to be, but one could not help feeling that the case was one of a kind on which the time of the Assembly should never have to be spent.

There will be naturally some difference of opinion as to the remedy, but there are several courses possible. One course would be to make the Synod's decision final in all cases that do not involve questions of doctrine or affect the constitution of the Church. These must necessarily be reserved, but in other cases the Synod is really in a better position to give the time and thought necessary to a proper understanding of the facts than the Assembly. Any one of the Synods is large enough to furnish an impartial court and further right of appeal only prolongs litigation without any corresponding advantage. Litigation must end somewhere, and it may as well end with the Synod as with the Assembly.

Should it, nevertheless, be thought desirable to retain the right of appeal to the Assembly, or to some body representing the Assembly, it would be far more satisfactory to have some rule as to the constitution of the Committee or bench of judges by which the matter should be tried. As a Court of Appeal the General Assembly corresponds to the House of Lords or the Privy Council, in which all matters are really disposed of by a Judicial Committee the constitution of which is known and whose report is final. Decision by the Assembly as a whole is little better than mob law, and should appeals ever become at all numerous the hearing of them would become utterly intolerable. Of course the best thing would be the cultivation and practice of such a spirit in the Church as would prevent the outbreak of disputes at all.

CHURCH STATISTICS.

NO report will be used more for reference during the year, nor will bear closer study than the statistical report prepared by the Moderator Rev. Dr. Torrance. A few items therefrom will be valuable to such of our readers as do not obtain the Blue Book.

The average payment to stipend by congregation alone per family was \$8.07, a decrease of 44 cents; and per communicant for the same purpose was \$4.44, an increase of 1 cent.

The contributions per family for strictly congregational purposes was \$17.01, a decrease of 2 cents; and per communicant \$8.81, a decrease of 4 cents.

For the Schemes of the Church each family paid on an average, \$3.04, an increase of 20 cents; and each communicant \$1.57, an increase of 10 cents.

For all purposes the average family contribution was \$21.35, an increase of 40 cents, and each communicant gave at the rate of \$11.08, an increase of 18 cents.

In the entire period of twenty-three years covered by reports there were only three in which there were decreases of income on preceding years, and the amount of these was \$119,313. The aggregate of the increase alone was \$1,306,942, or including the year of this report, \$1,385,645. There were only seven years in which the increases were larger, and none of these was since 1889. God has been extending the boundaries of the Church all this time, increasing her membership, granting outward peace and prosperity, and drawing in as revenue to His Kingdom from the enlarging resources He has been opening.

In the four Synods of the Maritime Provinces, Montreal and Ottawa, Toronto and Kingston, with the