

Government for a return giving the number of Petitions and signatures, it was ascertained that in all 166 petitions had been presented, and that to these 12,944 signatures were attached. The Government being asked whether it was their intention to introduce legislation on the subject, made reply that they were not prepared to do so during the present Session. The action of the Government on this matter, or rather their inaction, only goes to show how much greater is the necessity for vigorous and persevering agitation of the question by petition and otherwise.

Your Committee observe with much gratification that a stand is being taken by the ministers of different denominations in regard to unnecessary Sabbath funerals. The clergymen of the Church of England in the city of Hamilton have, in a recently published pastoral address, intimated their decision not to officiate at Sabbath funerals except under urgent circumstances, such as may arise from hot weather, danger of infection, etc. The reasons given for this decision are that the conducting of unnecessary funerals on that day deprives the caretaker of the cemetery and his assistants of their Sabbath rest, interferes with Sabbath School work, hinders many from attending evening service, and encourages desecration of the Lord's Day. The other ministers of the city maintain a similar attitude. It is to be hoped that this good example may be followed by all ministers of religion throughout the Dominion. In contrast to an item so pleasing, your Committee regret very much to have to report that the G. T. R. Co. have commenced running a passenger train each way on Sabbath between the cities of Toronto and Hamilton. It has, until recently, been the professed policy of the Company to start no passenger trains on the Sabbath, and this open abandonment of their previously professed rule is the more significant and deplorable.

Our intimate relation to the United States is such that this report would be incomplete, did it not make reference to what is being done there in the interests of Sabbath observance: and your Committee are gratified to know that very substantial progress is being made. The new Penal Code in respect of Sabbath observance throughout the State of New York came into force on the first day of December, 1882. On the first Sabbath under the new Code, some two hundred persons were arrested in the city of New York for Sabbath-breaking, comprising grocers, butchers, drivers of vehicles, boot-blacks, newspaper vendors, peddlers, barbers, cigar dealers, dry goods dealers, bill-posters, and others. The *New York Observer* speaking of the salutary effect of the new Code, says in its issue of that week, "It is the universal testimony that last Sabbath was the most quiet and orderly Sabbath day known to the present generation in this city."

Your Committee have also very much pleasure in observing that Col. Bennett H. Young, recently elected President of the Louisville, New Albany and Chicago Railroad, has set a noble example to all railroad authorities in respect of the Sabbath. The only passenger train that will be run on that day is that carrying mails, and efforts will be made to discontinue it. In case of perishable goods or live stock, freight trains will run when necessary only. The order further says:—"You will in future run no excursion trains of any kind, for any purpose, on the Sabbath. This order applies to camp-meeting trains. If Christian people cannot find other places for worship, this company will not violate the divine and civil law, and deny its employees the essential rest on the Sabbath to carry them to camp-meeting grounds. I am also informed that a number of the company's employees have conscientious scruples against any work on the Sabbath. There are, likely, others who do not feel so strongly on this subject. Under no ordinary circumstances must any employee who objects on the ground of his religious convictions be ordered or required to do any service on the Sabbath. If any difficulties arise in the execution of this regulation, you will please report them to me for consideration, and you will also notify the employees of their rights on conscientious grounds to be fully protected in the observance of the day of rest." The friends of the Sabbath in the States and in Canada will watch with much interest the history of a railroad managed in such a manner as to give public recognition to the authority of God, respect to the claims of religion, and opportunity and encouragement to all its employees to avail themselves of the rest and privileges of the Lord's day.

In conclusion, your Committee recommend:

1. That the attention of Synods be called to the importance of requiring written reports from their respective Committees on Sabbath Observance, so that said reports can be forwarded by Synod Clerks to the Assembly's Committee.
2. That the General Assembly's Committee be authorized to correspond with similar Committees of other Churches, with a view to united action in enforcing the present Sabbath law, and in petitioning the Dominion Parliament, and, if necessary, the Provincial Legislatures on the subject of Sabbath Observance; and in the event of joint action, that the Assembly's Committee transmit blank forms of petition to the Clerks of the several Presbyteries to be signed and forwarded, and that Presbyteries report their action in this matter to the Assembly's Committee.

W. T. McMULLEN, *Convener*.