

MEETING OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

REV. DR. LYLE, ELECTED MODERATOR.

HAMILTON, Ont., June 2.—The 35th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada was opened here in Central Church this evening. Over 600 commissioners were present from all parts of the Dominion. In the absence of Rev. Dr. Duval, owing to the death of his wife, the ex-moderator, Rev. Dr. Campbell, Montreal, presided.

Rev. Dr. Sedgwick, Tatamagouche, N. S., conducted the opening exercises.

In the course of Dr. Duval's sermon, read by Dr. Patrick, the writer dwelt upon the beautiful harmony existing between Christ and the Creation. He said the failure to recognize the fixed correlation between the growing soul and the guiding spirit had been the source of interminable troubles in the world. The spirit was leading the Church now into clearer understanding of the truth. This was an age of critical mind; of agonizing commercialism; an age that was consequently seeking relief in sensuous indulgence and vulgar display. It was an age of compound difficulties, of struggle for the mastery between capital and labor; an age that gave opportunity to men without principle; an age when some politicians played every game of the gambler, every trick of "bluff" to deceive the people; an age in which the press was not always free, sometimes purchased and used to cover villainy, to abuse and ruin if possible any soul that dared to oppose their crimes. Despite this, it was an age that was not content with itself. Men were struggling to free themselves from ills they could not clearly define. Their demands would not be met by reiteration of dry dogmas. The system of public education had taught the children to reason, and the pew was pushing traditions out of the pulpit. But earth must look to Heaven, men to God, and their spirits to the Holy Spirit.

Church Union.

After alluding to the function of the Spirit on the executive of the Godhead, the writer continued by asking if they were doing their best to put men worthy of the great men in the past into the ministry to-day. They must get away from the idea that God acted arbitrarily in calling men to the ministry. The men who had done the greatest work for God had been men of great natural force, stimulated by circumstances. Men were hard to breed for rich greatness, yet their students were sometimes made to appear as paupers. The soul must be kept in harmony with itself, if it was to do exploits in the field. It was time the Church was seeking to free itself from the abnormal position. At present their purpose was to unite the sentiments of all grave and learned men, and so, according to the rule of Scripture, bring the separated churches into one. Neither labor nor pains should be spared in effecting this.

Dr. Duval then dwelt at some length on unity, and said they should be led by the Spirit into a higher generalization of thought, into higher, deeper, and richer Christian ethics. They needed to be guided by Scripture in bringing all the churches together. Instead of childish invalids the world was demanding a church full of zeal for the amelioration of human conditions. Instead of bolstering these petty rivalries by gathering up scores of incompetent men to hold contested fields, the world was asking them to send men deeply cultured in all truth and competent to lead in the work of amelioration. They were only trifling with the mighty problems that burdened the heart of

the Son of God. The world cared little about their metaphysical distinctions, their criticisms, higher or lower; but when it gave a present living force in Christianity to lift the world to better things, it could reverence Jesus for the very work's sake. Now was the time. Whatever their actions might be, whether towards union, federation, or remaining as they were, he charged them to follow the guidance of God's spirit into all truth.

Rev. Dr. Campbell read a letter from Dr. Duval, in which he explained that he was unable to report on his stewardship in person owing to the sickness of his wife.

Rev. Dr. Lyle Elected.

The commissioners then proceeded to the selection of the next moderator. Rev. Dr. Lyle, Central Church, Hamilton, was nominated by Rev. Dr. Ratcliff, St. Catharines, seconded by Rev. Mc Gillvray, Vancouver; and Rev. Dr. Mac Kay, Toronto, Secretary of Foreign Missions, was nominated by Rev. J. McP. Scott, seconded by Rev. A. McGillvray. A ballot was demanded, and Rev. Dr. Lyle was elected by a large majority, the Assembly eventually making the choice unanimous. He accepted the honor on behalf of his church and the committee of which he was chairman, the Augmentation Fund committee.

Rev. Dr. Somerville, Toronto, requested that he be relieved of the duties of joint clerk, and the Assembly accepted his resignation with regret. Rev. Dr. Ratcliff was appointed to succeed him.

Upon the motion of Rev. Principal Gordon, a resolution of sympathy was passed in connection with Rev. Dr. Duval's recent loss of his wife.

At this point the adjournment for the evening was decided upon.

The Scottish Churches.

The General Assemblies of the three principal Presbyterian Churches in Scotland were opened in Edinburgh on the same day.

Church of Scotland.

The High Commissioner (Lord Kinnaid), held the usual levee at Holyrood Palace, and drove in semi-state procession to St. Giles's Cathedral. After service the procession went to the General Assembly hall.

The Rev. Dr. Mitford Mitchell, who presided, referred to the death in five months of five of those whom the Church had raised to the moderatorship. He nominated the Rev. Dr. James Robertson (Whittinghame) as Moderator of the Assembly.

Dr. Robertson having been introduced and having taken the chair, the King's letter was communicated to the House. In it reference was again made to the loss the Church had sustained by the death during his year of office of the late moderator.

The High Commissioner said he was commanded by the King to assure the fathers and brethren of His Majesty's great sense of their steady and firm zeal in his service, and to assure them of his resolution to maintain the Presbyterian Government in Scotland. (Cheers.) His Majesty further assured them of his deep interest in all that concerned the spiritual welfare of the people of Scotland. He was also commanded to acquaint them that His Majesty had been graciously pleased to order that the customary grant of £2,000 to the Highlands and Islands be continued, and to suggest that part of the grant might be beneficially appropriated to aiding and encouraging young men in the study of the Gaelic language.

Dr. Norman Macleod gave in the report of the Foreign Missions committee. As the result of a special appeal the whole debt, amounting to several thousand pounds, had been obliterated. (Cheers.) The expenditure for 1908 had been fully met, and they ended the year with a balance of over £700 to their credit.

Sir Andrew Fraser, ex-Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, as representing the Presbyterian Church of India, and a number of foreign missionaries spoke.

United Free Church.

At the United Free Church Assembly the Rev. Dr. Henderson, of Crief, was elected moderator. In his opening address he said that the unhappy division of Scottish Presbyterianism must be allowed to have done a real service in making clear the distinction between the rights of citizens and of the Church's members, and in limiting ecclesiastical authority as over those only who of their own free will submitted to it. Was there no cause to fear lest the Church, in a mistaken desire to win the world, should go over to the world?

The announcement that Dr. Henderson was to submit a motion on the communication from the Established Church on the subject of union attracted an enormous gathering.

The motion submitted by Dr. Henderson indicated that the assembly, while fully recognizing the duty of the United Free Church to promote fellowship and co-operation with all kindred churches in the service of their common Lord and in particular with the Church of Scotland, with whose operations those of the United Free Church of Scotland were in such close contact both at home and abroad, were unable hopefully to entertain the suggestion that conference on co-operation offers the path best fitted to lead to union. At the same time, the motion added, the assembly, believing that the outstanding causes of separation between churches might properly form the subject of conference between brethren who desire the removal of everything that mars the prosperity and peace of the Church of Christ in the land, declare, in accordance with the report of the committee, their readiness, should this course approve itself to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, to enter into unrestricted conference with their brethren of that Church on the existing ecclesiastical situation and on the main causes which keep the churches apart, with the earnest hope that by God's blessing misunderstandings and hindrances may be removed and the great object of Presbyterian reunion in Scotland thereby advanced.

Dr. George Robson seconded the motion, which was supported by Sir Samuel Chisholm and others, and unanimously approved.

The Free Church.

The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland met in its newly-constructed hall, when the retiring moderator, the Rev. W. Mackintosh, of Gairloch, preached. Unless, he said, Church and State should combine to teach the young of the nation more effectually the nature and danger of sin, and insist upon more obedience to the moral law of God, their people would perish in their own corruption. Even ministers with their clubs crowded to the golf links, and freely associated with the most careless and indifferent of men.

The Rev. James Henry, Burghhead, was elected moderator of this assembly.

Chinese Students.

The agitation which took place recently in connection with the graduation from McGill of Mr. Peter Hing, B.C.L., and his departure for China, having for its object the amendment of the Chinese Immigration Act, so as to allow Chinese students wishing to