

SYNOD OF TORONTO AND KINGSTON.

This Synod met in St. Andrew's Church, Guelph, on the evening of Wednesday, 7th May. The retiring Moderator (Rev. Prof. Mowat, M.A.), preached an excellent sermon; when, on motion of Rev. J. C. Smith, Rev. Prof. McLaren was unanimously chosen Moderator for the current year. On taking the chair, the Moderator, in suitable terms, acknowledged the compliment; and the Synod adjourned until tomorrow, at 10 a.m.

SECOND SEDERUNT.

The Moderator took the chair at 10 a.m., the first hour of the sederunt being occupied with devotional exercises.

CHANGES IN THE SYNOD.

The Clerk then read the minutes of last evening's meeting, in which was incorporated a statement of the various changes that had taken place within the Synod during the past year. According to this statement, one minister had been removed by death, ten had given in their demissions, and ten had been translated. There were seven inductions and fourteen ordinations, and fifteen students had been licensed. Four ministers were received from other denominations. Nine congregations and eleven mission stations had been erected.

The report of the Committee on bills and overtures, recommending the order of business for the day, was received and adopted, and the Synod proceeded to dispose of the several matters recorded in it.

The explanation received from the Presbytery of Lindsay with regard to the induction of Rev. S. Atcheson was accepted as satisfactory, as was also that of the Owen Sound Presbytery with regard to the absence of its records at last meeting of the Synod.

KNOX CHURCH, MOUNT FOREST.

The next matter taken up was that of the dispute about the Knox Church property in Mount Forest. Mr. John Martin, one of the trustees of that Church, had retained possession of the deed of the property, although, owing to some dispute, he had severed his connection with the congregation. The matter was first brought before the Saugeen Presbytery, and afterwards on appeal before the last Synod. It was there decided, after a long discussion, to request Mr. Martin to formally resign his position as trustee of the Church, and hand over the deed to the congregation. To this request of the Synod, Mr. Martin replied in effect that he could only comply with it on condition that either a share of the Church property should be given over to him and to those who acted with him, or that the matter should be left to arbitration. He also said that there were no legally elected trustees of the Church to whom he could hand over the deed, and expressed astonishment at the course the Synod had taken with regard to the matter.

The discussion of this affair occupied a large part of the sederunt, and the general conviction appeared to be that the Synod should have nothing further to do with it, although there was some difference of opinion as to how it should be disposed of. It was also pointed out that the holding of the deed by one party or the other made no material difference, as it was registered.

Rev. Principal Caven moved, seconded by Rev. Prof. Gregg.

That the Synod regrets that Mr. Martin has not seen his way to comply with the request of the Synod with regard to surrendering the deed held by him, but deems it necessary to take further action in the matter.

It was moved in amendment by Rev. G. Smellie, and seconded by Rev. A. Mackay, D.D.,

That seeing that the request made by the Synod to Mr. Martin has not been complied with, and this Court does not claim to interfere in civil matters, the case be now allowed to drop.

In further amendment to this it was moved by Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, seconded by Rev. J. K. Smith,

That the Synod dismiss the matter, and proceed to the next order of business.

The original motion was carried by a small majority.

Committees of three were then appointed to examine the records of the several Presbyteries.

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS.

The following students of Queen's College were, on application of the Presbytery of Kingston, admitted to public probationary trial for license:—John Ferguson, M.A., J. G. Stuart, B.A., George McMillan, B.A., and Hugh Cameron, B.A. On application of the Toronto Presbytery the following students of Knox College were similarly admitted:—John Ross, B.A., Donald Tait, B.A., S. H. Eastman, B.A., R. H. Abraham, B.A., and D. M. Beattie, B.A.

The Synod then adjourned, to meet again at 3 p.m.

AFTERNOON SEDERUNT.

The Synod resumed at 3 p.m.

REGISTRATION OF DEATHS.

The first item of business taken up was the consideration of the report of a Committee appointed at last meeting of the Synod to make application to the Ontario Government for the purpose of having the burdens of clergymen lightened in connection with the registration of deaths.

Rev. Prof. Gregg submitted the report of the Committee, which sets forth that the Committee had waited on the members of the Government in connection with the matter, and that the Act regarding registration had been slightly modified by the passage of a short Act, a copy of which was produced with the report. He represented, however, that this was not going as far as the members of the Synod had wished, as they held that no penalty should be attached to the failure of a clergyman to register the death of any person whose funeral he may have attended.

Rev. Mr. Ball held that in view of the fact that the laws of the province legalize marriages performed by clergymen, and that clergymen are also exempt from paying taxes, they should be willing to undertake the work required of them by the Registration Act.

Rev. Principal Caven objected to the principle involved in the Act. The performance of the marriage ceremony by a clergyman had been made a civil matter, but attendance at a funeral was totally different. He maintained that no such work should be required of a clergyman. He moved,

That the Synod thank the Committee for their zealous services, and re-appoint them with instructions to seek further audience of the Government with the view of representing to them the strong conviction of the Synod that ministers of religion, as such, should not be required to furnish the information at present demanded regarding deceased persons at whose funeral they may have officiated, and to seek that the law shall be so modified as to grant relief in the premises.

The Rev. Mr. Pringle seconded the motion. He pointed out that a clergyman who even did nothing more than offer up a prayer at a funeral placed himself in danger of being fined if he failed to register the death of the deceased person.

The Rev. Mr. Smellie thought that the best method of dealing with the matter was to ignore the Act altogether.

The motion of Principal Caven was adopted.

Prof. MacLaren's name and that of Prof. Caven were added to the committee, and the former made Convener.

PRINTING THE MINUTES.

The clerk presented a report in which he stated that he had had the minutes of the last Synod printed according to instructions, and also that he had had printed the last report of the committee on the state of religion. He recommended that authority be given for the printing of those documents in future. His report was adopted.

THE NEXT SYNOD.

The place and date of meeting for the next Synod was then taken up. After some discussion it was decided that it should meet in St. James' Square Church, Toronto, on the second Tuesday of next May, at 7.30 p.m.

MISSION BOARDS.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures reported an overture, signed by Rev. Principal Grant and others, in regard to the Mission Boards of the Church. It read as follows:—

That whereas the administration of the Home Mission, the Foreign Mission, and the French Evangelization schemes of the Church is characterized neither by unity of principle nor unity of method; whereas it is cumbersome and expensive; whereas it is not in accord with the well-understood principles of Presbyterian polity, and therefore does not impress the members of our Courts nor the people generally with a sense of their responsibility towards the common work of the Church: the General Assembly be humbly overtured to take the premises into consideration, and devise methods of administration that shall obviate as far as possible the evils referred to, impress a due sense of responsibility on all the membership of the Church toward its missions, and bring our missions under more effectual review of all the Courts of the Church.

Rev. Principal Grant supported this overture in a long and able address, in which he examined somewhat minutely the general working of the three schemes referred to in the overture. He had particularized those three schemes as being more important than any of the others. His object in bringing the overture before the Synod was to have a discussion on the matter. To illustrate the first statement in the preamble, he pointed out that the Home Mission work in the Maritime Provinces was administered by two Committees, while that of the western section was in the charge of one. The French Evangelization scheme too was in charge of a special agent, while a Committee managed the Home Mission work, which, being far the more important of the two, should rather claim the services of the special agent, and let the other remain in the hands of a Committee. Again, the Foreign Mission work was divided between two sections of the Church, each having its Committee, while the work should be essentially one of unity. The present system, he maintained, was cumbersome and expensive, inasmuch as there was too great an amount of machinery employed by it. He pointed to the travelling and other expenses of the Home and Foreign Missions Committees as proof of the expense, and the printing was also more expensive than it needed to be. Another evil was the want of interest in the schemes shown by members of the Church. Many congregations contributed to two or three of them, while very few assisted the whole of them. He referred also to the deficit which had burdened the Home Mission Committee, and which they had at length determined to make good out of their own pockets. He proceeded to suggest several remedies for the evils mentioned. He would have the Home Mission work left to the different Synods, as they were more likely to know the needs of the several districts, where the money should be applied, and where retrenchment should be practised. This would also increase the usefulness of the Synods, which, in the opinion of some, were almost unnecessary at present. It would almost serve to interest the people of the Church more in the scheme, bringing it nearer to them. It would also define the field for which subscriptions were asked from the parent Churches. Some disadvantages might be urged with regard to his scheme, and these he proceeded to deal with. Instead of Manitoba being under the charge of the Western Synods as now, it would have to be left to a Synod of its own to see to the expenditure of Home Mission funds. With regard to the Foreign Missions, he would advocate the combination of the two Committees, and leave the whole of the missions in charge of one Executive Committee, which should be much smaller than the present ones. The special agent of the French Evangelization should be required to act as such for the other Mission Boards as well. He concluded by moving the adoption of the overture.

Rev. Mr. Carmichael, of Markham, seconded the adoption of the overture, and supported many of the statements advanced by Prof. Grant.

Rev. J. M. King opposed the adoption of the overture. He would not object to its being transmitted to the General Assembly, but would not like to see the statements in the

preamble adopted by the Synod. He also differed with Principal Grant as to the best mode of administering the Home Mission work. He thought the work was far better seen to under the supervision of a Committee than it would be if controlled by the Synod, and was altogether opposed to Prof. Grant's idea of having the money raised in the district controlled by each Synod spent in that district alone. This would tend to divide the Church into sections, and would keep the sympathies of the people within narrow bounds.

The discussion was kept up by other speakers until 6 o'clock, when the Synod adjourned without taking any action in the matter.

EVENING SEDERUNT.

The Synod resumed at 7.30 p.m., when the report of the Committee on the state of religion was presented.

The following is a summary of the report:—The returns received from the various Presbyteries were first referred to, and were characterized as being rather meagre. The state of feeling with regard to the baptism of the young was regarded as favourable, but it was pointed out that home instruction of the young and family worship are too widely neglected, and urged that something be done to remedy this. With regard to the baptism of children whose parents are not members of the Church, a great deal of doubt and difference of opinion exists, and some Presbyteries express a desire to have a greater uniformity of practice, based on a definite ruling of the General Assembly. The Presbyteries generally testify that the attendance upon public worship is very regular. The proportion of adults enrolled as communicants varies in different congregations from one-half to nine-tenths. To improve this average faithful dealing with non-professing adults is urged, especially in the public ministrations of the pulpit. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is in most congregations observed quarterly, although some express a desire to have it observed more often. The attendance on prayer meetings is considered fair in the majority of congregations, although in too many it is very small. The hindrances to revival and the progress of Church work are intemperance, light trashy literature, indifference to religious interests, and worldliness. The report recommended that sessions of Presbyteries be urged to send in more complete returns, that the Assembly questions next year make inquiry about the proportion of young people among the communicants, that the attention of the sessions be called to evangelistic services, and that this Committee be empowered to co-operate in such services when desired.

Rev. Principal Caven rose to move the adoption of the report. He was pleased with its tone generally, and rejoiced in the improvements noted in it. He moved the following resolution, which was ably seconded by Mr. S. G. Smith, and passed:

The Synod receives and adopts the report, thanks the Committee, and especially the Convener, for their services, expresses its thankfulness for the tokens of Divine presence graciously vouchsafed, and it is hoped in some respects increased, expresses also its sorrow and humiliation on account of the many and great imperfections in the religious life of our congregations, of which the report contains evidence, and reappoints the Committee, with instructions to use its best endeavours to secure as full returns as possible for the ensuing year.

HOME MISSION FUND.

Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, by permission of the Court, introduced the subject of the deficiency in the H. M. Fund, and then moved the following resolution:—

The Synod, in view of the present position of the Home Mission Fund, records its satisfaction at the success which has attended the efforts of the Home Mission Committee to reduce the indebtedness of the Fund by appealing to the ministers of the Church, and commends the matter to the most liberal consideration of every minister within the bounds of this Synod; and inasmuch as the Home Mission Committee has been under the necessity of making a reduction in the grants to missionaries and minister of supplemented charges for the last six months, in order to equalize expenditure and income for the year, the Synod recommends that each Presbytery, should, if possible raise from local sources the amount required to pay in full those men within its own bounds who have been in receipt of grants from the Home Mission Committee. Further, the Synod humbly overtures the General Assembly to take such steps as it may deem wise to aid weak Presbyteries in which there is a disproportionately large mission field to make up the deficit referred to so far as it affects them, as well as to secure the payment of the still outstanding debt of nearly \$6,000, with which the Home Mission Committee began its operations last year.

This resolution was seconded by Rev. Dr. Wardrope, and carried unanimously.

The Synod then adjourned till to-morrow morning.

THIRD DAY'S PROCEEDINGS—MORNING SEDERUNT.

GUELPH, May 15.

The Synod resumed at ten o'clock this morning, opening with the usual devotional exercises.

The Committee on Bills and Overtures presented their second report, submitting the order of business for the day. It was adopted without change.

RECORDS OF PRESBYTERIES.

The first order of business for the sederunt was receiving the reports of the Committee on Presbytery Records. According to these reports the records of the various Presbyteries were correctly kept, with the exception of trifling irregularities of no real importance.

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH, GARAFRAXA.

A dissent and complaint against the action of the Guelph Presbytery in granting supply of sermon at Douglas was next taken up. The protesting parties were Revs. W. S. Ball, J. Middlemiss, J. K. Smith, W. Millican, and R. Torrance. The circumstances which led to this action and complaint may be briefly recounted. Some time ago a portion of the congregation of St. John's Church at Douglas, in the township of Garafraza, became dissatisfied with the Rev. W. Mil-