

with instructions to report at next Assembly. — (1) Is it desirable to decide on a permanent place of meeting? If so, what place? (2) Should the billeting system be done away with? If so, what arrangements should be made with regard to expenses of commissioners? The report carried.

Union with other Churches.

The report of the Committee on "Union with other Churches" was presented by Rev. Principal Caven D.D.

The Committee on Union with other Churches reported. —

No instructions were given to the Committee, but a communication from the Quadrennial Conference of the Methodist Church, suggesting the appointment of a Federal Court, composed of representatives of negotiating Churches, was referred to it. As the matter of this communication is important, and the Committee could not well be convened, the following circular embracing the communication from the Methodist Church was sent to each member of the Committee:—

To the Members of the Committee on Union with other Churches, appointed by the General Assembly at its Meeting in London, Ont., in June, 1895.

There was presented to the General Assembly of last year, a communication from the Quadrennial Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada, suggesting the appointment of some kind of Federal Court, composed of representatives of negotiating Churches, to which matters affecting the work of the Churches, other than questions of Creed, Discipline, or the Independence of the Churches, might be referred. The general Assembly received the communication with satisfaction and referred it for consideration to its Committee on Union.

The communication, which is in the form of a Resolution of the Conference, reads as follows:—

"Whereas, the General Conference has already affirmed its willingness to negotiate with other Protestant Churches on the question of Union; and, whereas, the needs of the missionary work at home and abroad call more forcibly than ever for economy, for mutual recognition of sister Churches and for co-operation:

'1 It is desirable, in the judgment of this Conference, to establish a Federal Court, composed of representatives of negotiating Churches.

"2 Such Court, when established, shall not have power to deal with questions of creed or discipline, or with any question vitally affecting the independence of the negotiating Churches.

"3. The General Conference of the Methodist Church, now, on its part, appoints the following persons to be its representatives in such Federal Court, viz.:

"Central Section—Ontario and Quebec: Revs. Dr. A. Sutherland, Dr. T. G. Williams, Dr. W. C. Henderson, and Judge Deacon and A. Shaw.

"Eastern Section—The Maritime Provinces: Revs. S. F. Huestis, Dr. Borden, Dr. Hartz, C. H. Paisley, M.A., R. W. Weddall, M.A., J. R. Inch, L.L.D.

"Western Section—West of Ontario: Revs. Jas. Woodsworth, J. F. Betts, A. W. Ross, and J. A. M. Atkins, Q.C., and E. Odium, M.A.

Newfoundland Section: Revs. Dr. Milligan and J. Nurse, and Hon. J. J. Rogerson.

"Each Section shall organize separately, and shall have power independently of other Sections to consult and act with representatives of other Churches in the territory assigned to them.

"The officers of the Central Section shall call the whole Court when a majority of the several Sections shall deem it necessary.

"The functions of the Court shall be to consult and act with the representatives of other Churches, with a view to co-operation and economy in regard to 'dependent charges' within their territory."

The convening of a committee so large and widely scattered as the Committee on Union being impracticable, may I request an expression, in writing, of your opinion on the following points:

1. The response which the General Assembly should make to the proposal of the Methodist Church to establish a Federal Court for the purpose indicated in the Resolution of the Conference Should the General Assembly concur in this proposal?

2. Whether, in the event of the proposal being approved, the function of such Federal Court might in any direction be properly extended. Might such Federal Body be entrusted, e.g., with the duty of giving public expression to the opinion of the Churches represented on moral or religious questions affecting the welfare of the community, or of other lands, and of taking public action to promote the well-known views of the Churches represented in relation to such questions?

3. Are there any other measures in connection with the object

for which the Committee on Union is appointed which you would at present recommend the General Assembly to adopt?

Kindly reply to this circular as soon as convenient, that the Convener may be in a position to report to the General Assembly at its approaching meeting in Toronto.

Yours sincerely,

Toronto, 14th April, 1896.

WM. CAVEN, Convener.

To this circular fourteen members of the Committee have replied. All these answer the first question in the affirmative. Eleven answer the second question with a definite "yes"; i.e., they approve of extending the functions of the proposed Federal Court beyond what is suggested in the communication from the Methodist Church, so as to provide an organ for giving united public expression to the sentiments of the Confederating Churches on moral or religious questions which affect the welfare of the community, or of other lands. Two replies say "no" to the second question; one is indefinite.

It is stated in certain replies that the Synod of the Maritime Provinces and the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa have already taken action touching Home Missions, in the line of the proposal made by the Methodist Church, though little or nothing practical has yet resulted; and the view is expressed that effective action can be taken by the General Assembly only.

The replies to the circular addressed to the members of the Union Committee abundantly warrant the submission of the following Recommendations to the General Assembly:—

1. That the General Assembly approve of the formation of such a body as is proposed by the Quadrennial Conference of the Methodist Church.

2. That the Committee on Union be re-appointed, with instructions to confer with the Committee of the Methodist Church, with the view of giving further consideration to the functions of such body as it is proposed to form, and to report to the General Assembly.

The suggestion of a member of your Committee that the term "Council," rather than "Court," should be the title of the proposed federal body, should such body be called into existence, seems worthy of attention.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

WM. CAVEN, Convener.

In moving the adoption of the report the Rev. Principal drew attention to the suggestion of a member of the Committee that the word "council," rather than "court," should be the title of the proposed body. He also pointed out that should the report carry, the Assembly did not commit itself, as the matter after careful consideration during the year, would come before next Assembly who could put an end to all negotiations did it consider the plans, which might be supposed, not feasible. After further discussion, Rev. Principal Caven moved in amendment to the Committee's recommendation, that a Federal court be appointed, the addition of words, "Provided a satisfactory definition of its duties can be agreed on." This was agreed to, and the Committee's report as amended was then adopted.

Mr. J. K. Macdonald presented a minute regarding Rev. Dr. Wardrop's desire to retire from the Convener'ship of the Foreign Mission Committee. The minute referred in highest terms to Dr. Wardrop's work on the Committee, and recommended that his desire to retire be complied with. It was agreed to.

The Committee appointed to deal with the Sabbath school Committee's report recommended that the work of publication be removed from St. John, N.B., to Toronto; that Rev. Mr. Fotheringham, now in charge of the work, be relieved from his pastoral charge, so that the publication department might receive his whole attention; that Mr. Fotheringham's salary be \$1,200; that those having charge of publications be authorized to borrow \$5,000 in order to transfer the work to Toronto, and wipe out any deficit. It was shown that on the present basis of circulation, and the present tenders for the work to be done, during the ensuing year, the work of publication would soon be on a sound financial basis. Rev. Dr. Laing opposed the recommendations. He was in particular strongly opposed to the borrowing of \$5,000. The present liabilities, he considered, were heavy enough. Considerable discussion followed, and several amendments were proposed. Finally Rev. Dr. Fraser moved that in view of the small attendance of commissioners the whole matter be left over until next Assembly, the publication work, in the meantime, to be carried on as at present.

The Closing Session.

There was a very small attendance at the evening and last session of the meeting. The Assembly passed loyal addresses to her Majesty the Queen and the Governor-General of the Dominion. The addresses will be engrossed and forwarded to her Majesty and