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GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(Continued from page 413.)

nection with the common hymnal. The report of the committee was in substance to thank the British committee for the hearty and most courteous reception which they had given to the delegates from our Church, their kindness, in sending out a large supply for the use of the Assembly of the "Draft Common Hymnal," and to postpone farther action in the bringing out of the proposed "Book of Praise" for our own Church, until it shall be seen at the next Assembly if the common hymnal plan is likely to be successfully carried out within a reasonable time. The Rev. Dr. Moore, of Ottawa, with a good deal of earnestness opposed this course and pointed out strongly the objections to it of various kinds, but after the calm, full and clear statement of the whole case made to the Assembly by Mr. MacMillan, the plan recommended by the committee was adopted, and accordingly the subject will be reported upon at next Assembly by the same committee, except for a small addition to it. The common hymnal, so far as it has gone, is spoken of in the highest terms by all the members of the committee, and only requires some additions to it, to adapt it still better to our special wants, to make it all that could be desired as a hymn book for the service of praise in our Church.

EVENING SEDERUNT.

The Augmentation funds East and West reported upon. The working of these funds has been for the most part exceptionally difficult and discouraging. This year they are happily both in a more encouraging condition. Their great value to the Church cannot for a moment be doubted. In the East since the fund was started 13 congregations have been nursed by it into being self-supporting, and last year 48 weak and struggling congregations received promises of help to the amount of \$5,015 and a marked increase has taken place in the settlements in charges of this kind. With two exceptions every Presbytery this year increased its contributions, and the total increase was \$400; the total receipts were \$8,263, but the expenditure exceeded this amount by \$95. "On the whole, however," says the report, "the work of the year has been very gratifying. A larger number of congregations than ever before have been helped by the fund, and that not because they showed less disposition to help themselves, but, on the contrary, they felt the need of supply, and bestirred themselves to secure the advantages of a settled ministry."

In the Western section, reported upon by the Rev. D. J. Macdonell, a like hopeful and encouraging state of things is found. In the first place, last year owing the difficulty which had been experienced in working this fund, and repeated deficits, it was thought advisable to put it under a separate committee which should give its whole attention to it. Special efforts also in various ways were made during the year in its behalf, such as visitation of Presbyteries, a thorough revision of grants and the preparation and distribution of a leaflet in its interests. The result has been gratifying. The report says, "A year ago there was a deficit of \$4,500, and it was necessary to make a deduction of \$36 from each grant (though this was in many cases made up by local effort). This year, grants have been paid in full and though the Financial Statement shows a slight balance (\$766) against the fund it is strictly speaking \$466. Even the small deficit mentioned would not have appeared but for charging against the fund one-fourth of the salary and expenses of Mr. Finlay, as superintendent of the Algoma and Muskoka districts; a proposal made by the Home Mission Committee, which is to be a subject of conference between the two Committees."

The amount received from all sources during the past year is \$25,436.05, as compared with \$23,376, (of which \$1,000 was a bequest) in the preceding year; leaving the bequest out of account, this indicates an advance from ordinary sources of about \$3,000. It is satisfactory to note that while there have been a few generous donations, this result has been secured mainly by a general raising of the standard of giving. In 22 Presbyteries out of 26 in Ontario and Quebec, there has been increased liberality, and the increase in contributions from these Provinces amounts to over \$2,500. In the West, also, the reported improvement is considerable. The number of congregations at present requiring aid is 142, and the average grant is about \$170.

The Rev. Peter Wright, of Portage la Prairie, spoke in the strongest terms of the great benefits which this fund has in the past rendered to weak congregations in the West, and how indispensable it is. In looking to the future, the report in

closing says, "If Presbyteries will be careful and conscientious in making thorough examination of each case before applying for a grant; if ministers will give the necessary information to their people about the working of the scheme and the benefits resulting from it; if congregations that have done well for the fund will not go back, and if those that have been less generous will reasonably increase their contributions; if we look 'not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others,' there is no fear of failure."

SIXTH DAY.

This is one of the great works of the Church, and the report of it is always looked for with interest. The Rev. Dr. MacVicar, of Montreal, who has become a veteran in it, presented the report. The following summary will be read with interest:—

Twenty-five pastors, ordained missionaries and licentiates, ten student missionaries, seven colporteurs, and twenty-three teachers were employed. There were thirty-six mission fields with ninety-three preaching stations; connected with which were seven hundred and eight five families. Nine hundred and eighteen pupils attended Sabbath School. Thirteen hundred and nine copies and portions of the Scriptures and about sixteen thousand religious tracts and illustrated papers were distributed. Two hundred and three were added to the Church, (fifty of these were English), making a membership of eleven hundred and five.

Six hundred scholars, over forty per cent. of whom came from Roman Catholic homes, were enrolled in the twenty Mission Day and five Night Schools, with an average attendance of four hundred and twenty-five. One hundred and seventy-three pupils attended the Pointe aux Trembles Schools, of whom ninety-four belonged to Roman Catholic families. The contributions from fields were five thousand, six hundred and eleven dollars (exclusive of school fees). The total receipts were thirty-four thousand, one hundred and fifteen dollars.

As regards its finances the Board are gratified to report that, notwithstanding the prevailing business depression, the year closes free from debt, and that the total receipts are considerably in excess of those of any former year. This is owing to the receipt of \$39,000 from the executor of the estate of the late Hon. J. G. Ross, Quebec. After defraying certain expenses the greater part of the balance of this sum has been invested, and the interest will be available annually for the maintenance of the work.

The Rev. Dr. MacVicar in presenting the report made a brief, but powerful speech, powerful often for what he did not say, but suggested, as to the spirit, power and aims of popery. He referred to the aim of the committee, and of their determination to abide by it, simply to give the gospel to French Roman Catholics; the outlook, the immense wealth of the Church, the increasing aggressiveness of the Jesuits, the rising spirit of liberty, steadily growing among the intelligent upper classes of the French, demanding freedom from priestly control, common schools for Quebec and separation of Church and state, a spirit which cannot and will not always be repressed.

The Rev. Mr. Heine, of Montreal, in moving the adoption of the report, referred to the agencies employed the progress made, and the systematic ousting of Protestants in the Eastern Townships to make room for Roman Catholics.

Thanks to the committee, especially to Dr. MacVicar, were moved by Mr. Drysdale, of Montreal, and agreed to. Rev. Dr. King, speaking in connection with this report in its educational aspects, strongly emphasized the value of Christian education as a means of propagating Christian ideas, and members of the Assembly were urged to continued interest in this work. The closing sentence of the report is wholly in this line and is one of hope and encouragement: "The Board is persuaded that the time is opportune, and the conditions were never so favorable for bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ in its purity, its sweetness and power to the people. That is what they need, and all they need—a Gospel of Christ proclaimed, trusted, loved and lived, and 'to Him shall the gathering of the people be.'"

SEVENTH DAY.

The Rev. Dr. Dickson, of Galt, convener of the Committee on Remits, reported on the remit, proposing the amalgamation of the Committees on Temperance, Sabbath Observance, the State of Religion and Systematic Benevolence. There were murmurs of dissent against this by some, but as Presbyteries had answered largely in favor of it, it was adopted.

The calling and settling of ministers is a subject towards which the attention of the Church has for some length of time been directed, and as it has been supposed that certain evils have arisen in the Church in this connection, the report of the convener of the committee to which the remits on this subject were referred was looked forward

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to with much interest. The Rev. Kenneth MacLennan presented a very full report. Several Presbyteries reported congregations which had suffered from the length of their vacancies. Congregations requiring Gaelic were placed at a special disadvantage from the difficulty of finding Gaelic supply. Vacancies averaged in length from nine to fourteen months. The average length of the pastorate, upon examination, was found to be seven years and four months. Presbyteries, it was shown, had the matter very much in their own hands; they have power to supply vacancies, to grant translations and dissolve the pastoral tie. Faithfulness on their part was recommended in guiding wisely and firmly congregations when they become vacant, and they should lose no time in seeking to ascertain as soon as possible the mind of congregations after hearing those eligible for a call. The circumstances of congregations were so different that it was found difficult to lay down any rule of procedure to shorten vacancies which would be generally workable, and upon the whole there was not found to be in the Church such a state of things in this respect as to call for a departure from our present system.

The Rev. Dr. Campbell, of Montreal, spoke at some length, noticing that the state of things in Toronto, the Presbytery of which city overtook the Assembly, as having a superabundance of ministers without charge, was exceptional. He spoke of causes which led to unrest in the Church, such as our nearness to the United States, the

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