

The General Assembly.

ENCOURAGING REPORTS FROM HALIFAX.

Statistics Shows Wonderful General Progress.

HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONS

(From our own Correspondent.)

Halifax, June 14.—The 26th Presbyterian General Assembly of Canada, met in St. Matthew's Church last night. A large number of commissioners was present, and a large congregation assembled to participate in the opening exercises. Rev. Dr. Campbell, retiring moderator, preached an able and appropriate sermon from Psalm 46: 5—"God is in the midst of her she shall not be moved."

The sermon was in some sense a review of the moral and religious history of the century, bearing more particularly upon the developments which have taken place in Great Britain and her colonies an exalted and appropriate vein of patriotism running through the whole.

In retiring from the chair Dr. Campbell said he was moved by exceedingly pleasant memories of the kindness and confidence everywhere extended to him by the people while acting in the discharge of the duties imposed upon him. He heartily thanked the assembly for the kindness, forbearance and co-operation extended to him during the past year. He spoke of the closing year of the century as a memorable one, referring in that connection to the prosperity which prevails in Canada, the war in South Africa, and the honorable part played therein by the great colonies of the Empire; the famine in India, and the fire disaster in Ottawa and Hull, which drew forth the large-hearted liberality of the people of the whole empire. He also called attention to the fact that we have to mourn for friends whom we shall see no more on this side of the stream of death—large-hearted men, loyal to the church and to the Master, who companioned with us in many past assemblies. In this connection Dr. Campbell named Rev. Dr. Morrison, Rev. Dr. McDonald, Rev. Dr. T. G. Smith, Rev. Alex Young and Rev. Dr. Dun can paying fitting tributes to their memory and their worth. These things, he said, were reminders that the shadows were lengthening for all of us.

When nominations for the moderatorship were called, Rev. K. McLennan, of Metis, seconded by Rev. Dr. Lyle of Hamilton, nominated Rev. Principal Pollok, stating various potent and pertinent reasons why he should be elected and elected unanimously. It was easy to be seen by the applause with which the nomination was received that Dr. Pollok's election was a foregone conclusion. That it would be unanimous was made certain when Rev. John Neil of Toronto, spoke strongly in support of Dr. Pollok, intimating that those who had had another nomination in view had heartily agreed that the election should be unanimous. Dr. Grant said he found when he came down here that the east was "solid" for Principal Pollok. The election was of course by acclamation.

The new moderator was then escorted to the chair amid the applause of the assembly. He accepted and acknowledged the honor conferred upon him in well chosen terms:

The choice of moderator is in every way regarded as an excellent one.

THE FIRST THREE DAYS.

Halifax, June 16.—The first three days' work of the assembly has been disposed of with business like promptitude and in the most harmonious manner. It is greatly facilitated work to have committee reports printed in advance and submitted in concise form.

Already the following reports have been dealt with and disposed of: Home Missions, Colleges, Aged and Infirm Ministers' fund, Ministers' Widows and Orphan's funds, Century fund, Distribution of Probationers, Statistics, the Records, Sabbath School publications and Foreign Missions, besides which other miscellaneous business has been transacted.

Dr. Pollok is proving a model presiding officer.

One of the pleasing incidents of the assembly's sessions was the visit of a deputation from the Diocesan Synod of the Church of England, now in session in Halifax, conveying to the Presbyterians of Canada through their Commissioners, kindly Christian greetings. The deputation, consisting of Rural Dean Armitage and Ven. Archdeacon Kaulbeck, received a conspicuously hearty reception. The following day, Friday, a deputation of the assembly, consisting of Principal Caven, Principal Grant, Rev. Dr. Sedgewick and George Mitchell, M. P. P., returned the visit and were most kindly and heartily received by the Diocesan Synod. The incident was a most pleasing one calculated to do much towards promoting Christian unity and co-operation in promoting the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom.

Thursday night was devoted to Home Missions. The reports, east and west, indicated a very satisfactory condition of affairs, but great scope for expansion in the west calling for more men and more money. There were eloquent addresses by Dr. McMillan, Dr. Warden, Dr. Robertson and Rev. Mr. Pringle to large audiences. Mr. Pringle captured the hearts and sympathies of the people by his thrilling story of mission life and work on the Yukon trails.

HOME MISSIONS—EASTERN DIVISION.

At the date of last report the number of ordained missionaries in charge of congregations to which they had been appointed was 37. Of these five have been called by and settled over the congregations in which they were labouring. Three of these congregations are self sustaining and two are receiving aid from the augmentation fund. Congregations at present under care of ordained missionaries number 37. Two catechists were employed during the winter and 41 during the summer. Thirty nine groups of stations were served by the catechists and some assistance was given to pastors in large and scattered congregations. In these fields are 1,738 families claiming to be Presbyterians, 2,185 communicants, 1,788 attending Sabbath Schools and 1,718 attending the weekly prayer meetings.

The committee report the finances in a satisfactory condition. They began the year with a balance due the treasurer of \$1027.99, and closed it with a balance on hand of \$98.03, showing receipts in excess of expenditure of \$726.02. The receipts during the year were \$14,377.45, as against \$13,186.83 for the previous year, an increase of \$590.62. Of this amount \$1,315.56 were contributed for home missions in the Northwest. The committee calls for contributions equal to those of last year. The report makes appropriate reference to the death of the late Dr. Morrison.

HOME MISSIONS—WESTERN DIVISION

During the quarter of a century that has elapsed since the union of 1875, the western section of the Church has contributed about \$1,500,000 for home mission work. In 1875 there were 132 mission fields and 86 augmented congregations in the western section. Since that date 641 new mission fields have been organized, making a total of 859. Of this number 93 have been merged into other congregations, 162 are now on the augmented list, 386 on the list of home mission fields and 218 have become self-supporting; so that, during the past twenty-five years the home mission committee has fostered and helped to support 218 congregations and raised to the status of augmented charges 162 mission fields, all of which are now giving generous help to the various departments of the work of the church.

During the past year 42 new mission fields have been opened, seven mission fields have become self-supporting, and 21 have been raised to the status of augmented charges. Of the 42 new mission fields

opened last year in the western section of the church, 31 are in Manitoba, the Northwest and British Columbia.

In his report Dr. Robertson states that the close of the assembly year there were 115 missions connected with the Synod of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories, with 433 stations; and 87 missions with 311 stations, connected with British Columbia—in all 200 missions and 749 stations. Dr. Robertson's review on home mission work in the above fields is inspiring and encouraging. He lays special stress upon the importance of the church grappling more earnestly than ever with the problem of giving the Gospel in its purity to the foreign immigrants who are settling in our western provinces. Speaking of the Galicians and Doukhobors Dr. Robertson says: "As far as one can judge, these people are blessed with average health and are men and women of good physique. They do not flock to cities and towns but stay on the land, and they gladly accept land that Canadians and others rejected years ago. They are helping to solve the 'servant girl' problem and the problem of cheap labor. They have much to learn yet and they are apt pupils, and because their industry and thrift, and their inexpensive mode of living, they are sure to prosper in worldly matters. In faith they are Roman or Greek Catholics. Lutherans or members of the Reformed Church. Although they understand English but imperfectly, the Roman and Greek Catholics attend religious services in considerable numbers when conducted within their reach even when the ministers are Protestants."

The following statistics for the section of the church west of Lake Superior show the wonderful progress that has been made since 1875.

	1875	1899
Synods	—	2
Presbyteries	—	15
Congregations	4	136
Missions to Whites	2	240
Ministers	10	238
Catechists	1	142
Families (whites)	319	16,613
Single persons (whites)	226	19,035
Communicants (whites)	432	24,033
Contributions	\$5,421	\$839,125

The expenditure on home missions (west) last year was \$21,611.30, leaving a deficit on the 1st of April, 1900, of 788.49. For the current year the committee calls for \$94,000 to meet growing requirements.

Friday night was devoted to Foreign Missions, and a large congregation listened to fine addresses given by Mr. Gauld from Formosa, Dr. Morton from Trinidad, Messrs Russell and Wilkie from Central India, and Mr. Winchester from British Columbia. The latter poured hot shot into the ranks of political agitators in British Columbia who are clamoring for the exclusion of the Chinese.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

The following is a summary of the Foreign Mission report:

The report of the foreign mission committee is always intensely interesting to the Presbyterians of Canada. Their knowledge of and former associations with the missionaries and teachers who have gone from Canada to labor among the heathen in foreign lands, not a few of whom have laid down their lives there, always invests the foreign missions of the church with growing interest and to some extent with a romance not incompatible with the sacredness and responsibility of mission work. The mission staff of the church in foreign fields is steadily enlarging, notwithstanding the decimation of its ranks by death and enforced retirement. The missionaries and teachers in foreign fields—including missionaries to the Indians and Chinese of the Northwest and British Columbia—number in all 113, as follows:

New Hebrides 3—all from Nova Scotia; Trinidad, 11—ten of whom are from the maritime provinces, the other four being East Indians; Demerara, 1—from Nova Scotia; Korea, 3—from the maritime provinces; North-West Indians, 34 several of whom

(Continued on Page 397)